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DEBTOR NATION

What if we go under?

LIAM GREIDER

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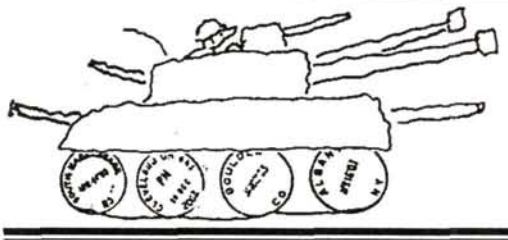

R.O. BLECHMAN

OUT, OUT, DAMN OUTSOURCING

We asked readers to comment on our March 22 forum, "Toward a Progressive View on Outsourcing," and we weren't disappointed. We heard from "one of the already marginalized medical transcriptionists," a "50-year-old progressive trying to hang on by the skin of my teeth to employment in the computer-programming industry," a Hollywood studio lighting technician berating "an international trade regime that protects and legitimizes job-raiding" and a man who headed to Alabama from Detroit in 1944 for construction work. Others suggested everything from a thirty-five-hour workweek and a $14 minimum wage, to a federal tax on the profits of outsourcing companies, to international wage-per-hour laws. Others see outsourcing as "born-again colonialism," with America at last "at the receiving end of globalization" and the "race to the bottom" as no longer a local problem but a global one. A reader who grew up in Oklahoma during the Great Depression predicts that "the 21st-century Great Depression will be much worse...."

—The Editors

Portland, Ore.

■ Sarah Anderson and John Cavanagh propose a new approach to international trade that would "include supports for internationally recognized labor rights as well as punishments for corporations that violate them." How to get there is the question. The usual answer is to place labor and environmental standards in trade agreements, but to date those standards have gone no further than requiring each country to enforce either domestic or internationally recognized labor and environmental laws. Given the great imbalance of power between multinational corporations and most developing countries (only thirty countries now have a GDP higher than that of Wal-Mart), it is neither useful nor fair to punish developing countries for not controlling corporate behavior.

What we want is to halt the "race to the bottom" in wages, working conditions and environmental and consumer protection. We want to insure the ability of workers in all countries to organize collectively against exploitation. We want to prevent the flight of investment to countries least able or willing to protect their workers' rights, with the same investors then turning around and dumping their products in rich countries.

The question is not whether we need protection, but from whom we need protection. After all, the trade imbalance with China is not really with China but with multinational corporations manufacturing in China and selling in the United States. More than 50 percent of imports consist of goods moving within firms. Regardless of which labor or environmental standards are included in a theoretical trade agreement, as long as the available sanctions are against governments for not enforcing those standards, it will impose a hardship on the government but will not likely change the corporations' behavior. Simply put, the punishment is directed at the wrong actor. What's needed is a fundamental shift from sanctioning countries to sanctioning corporations.

The failure of the environmental and labor side agreements in NAFTA was in great part because the weapons given to the corporations to fight environmental and labor regulations were far more potent than the agreement. Under NAFTA, corporations ("investors") were given the unprecedented right to sue foreign governments for enforcing laws or regulations that the corporation could show were "tantamount to expropriation," meaning that they reduced profit-taking. These cases have resulted in multimillion-dollar payments to corporations, which obviously serve to chill governments' willingness to enforce environmental or labor laws.

But it is possible to turn the logic of NAFTA's investor-rights clause on its head. Through this mechanism, multinational corporations for the first time became acknowledged parties to trade agreements, and thus trade agreements could impose obligations directly on multinational corporations. The WTO and NAFTA could be revised to create sanctions against corporations that violate basic norms, such as the fundamental International Labor Organization (ILO) standards, including the right to organize and bargain collectively.

Assuming the ILO had sufficient resources to investigate alleged violations, its findings could trigger sanctions in the form of retaliatory tariffs, import restrictions or straightforward penalties targeted directly at that corporation's products or services, at a level that would make it prohibitively expensive for the corporation to persist in its violations. The revenue could go into a common fund that would provide further resources for enforcement.

Corporations could be forced to abide by basic international norms wherever they did business, regardless of the ability or will of the individual nation to enforce those norms. Developing countries would not be penalized for corporate misbehavior, but corporations would be unable to reap a reward for violations of human and environmental rights. Working conditions for workers around the world would improve, and the notion of fair trade would begin to have some meaning.

BARBARA DUDLEY

Detroit

■ Beyond offshoring and downsizing, the issue of jobs being outsourced to nonunion plants here in the United States needs to be addressed. Two examples: Last July, the *Detroit Free Press* reported on a Vance, Alabama, Daimler-Chrysler plant that was importing workers from Eastern Europe to work "as many as 65 hours and seven days a week" for $1,100 a month—that's less than $5 an hour, a fraction of what the same job would pay in a union plant. While this example is extreme, the Vance plant is one of many nonunion auto plants scattered throughout the "right to work" South. Meanwhile, as the US steel industry has hemorrhaged thousands of union jobs in just the past few years, "minimills"—smaller, largely nonunion steel plants—have sprouted up across the country. In 2002 these minimills accounted for 46 percent of US crude steel production. Bush's tariffs will do little to halt the flow of union jobs to these domestic low-cost producers. These nonunion plants, in industries that have traditionally been heavily unionized, have had a devastating effect on union wages and benefits in the manufacturing sector, as unionized companies cut costs at their employees' expense to compete with domestic nonunion competitors.

Instead of echoing the protectionism of the Bush Administration, unions must devote more resources to organizing the thousands upon thousands of unorganized manufacturing jobs here in the United States, getting a foothold in the largely nonunion South and developing a comprehensive strategy for fighting plant closings in the Midwest and Northeast.

WILLIAM JOHNSON
Labor Notes

Falls Church, Va.

■ I found it strange that no mention was made of healthcare costs as a driver for moving jobs. Recent articles about the difference in costs of making cars in this country compared with other countries where healthcare is a government responsibility show the financial disadvantage for US industry. It is also the major advantage that companies like Wal-Mart—with a willingness to "race to the bottom"—have against companies with more ethics and morality.

A universal national healthcare system would be a major factor in leveling the playing field, in providing more equitable competition among companies, in providing less incentive to outsource jobs, in providing major benefits for workers needing to retrain for new jobs, in decreasing risks in new hiring and in decreasing

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EDITORIALS

Take Back Our Rights

The Bush Administration may be mired in confusion and at cross-purposes on many fronts—Iraq, Afghanistan, the economy, education—but its assault on women's reproductive freedom has been a marvel of purpose and planning. It is hard to believe that during the last presidential election the fashionable view held that both candidates were basically posturing on abortion to fire up their base. *Roe v. Wade* was untouchable, countless pundits assured us: Republican strategists would never really go after abortion, because they feared awakening the sleeping pro-choice electoral giant. The dire warnings of Planned Parenthood, NARAL and NOW were just a direct-mail scare tactic. When Bush won the White House, the story line was similar: Having lost the popular vote, the President would govern from the center, as the "uniter not a divider" he claimed to want to be.

The past three years have shown how unwise that worldly wisdom was. Backed by Bush and capitalizing on Democratic disarray, opponents of legal abortion have scored one victory after another. We've had the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban, the Unborn Victims of Violence Act and health coverage of poor pregnant women morphing into health coverage for the fetus under the Children's Health Insurance Program. We've seen Bush nominate a flood of extreme right-wingers to the federal bench and use recess appointments to install two who had been filibustered out by the Democrats. Bush's judicial picks will shape the courts for decades to come and provide a talent pool for the Supreme Court seats that are certain to open up in the next few years. Thanks to the newly released papers of Justice Harry Blackmun, we now know that in 1992 the Supreme Court nearly overturned *Roe*. Who would say *Roe* is more secure today than it was then?

Globally, the Administration has used American might to advance an agenda pleasing to Christian conservatives at home. Poor women around the world have been denied reproductive healthcare through Bush's reinstatement of the "gag rule" and his refusal to release $34 million pledged by Congress to the United Nations Population Fund (the latter decision was based on the bogus claim—disproved by Bush's own fact-finding commission—that UNFPA supports forced abortion in China). The Administration has capitulated to fundamentalist demands by earmarking a third of all prevention dollars in its international AIDS package for abstinence education—while failing to provide the Global Fund to Fight AIDS with desperately needed dollars. Bush sent antifeminist delegates to UN conferences on children, sustainable development and population to wreck consensus by aligning the United States with the Vatican, Iran, Libya, Sudan and Saddam's Iraq.

The repressive sexual politics of the antiabortion movement have infected public schools, as some $135 million annually is poured into abstinence-only education (which got its start, it must be noted, in the welfare reform law signed by President Clinton). If the Republicans have their way, funding for these programs—which mandate that birth-control methods may be discussed only in terms of their failure rates, and homosexuality, abortion and masturbation may not be discussed at all—will double next year.

Antichoice politics have also corrupted science: Bush put the kibosh on stem-cell research and has packed crucial expert panels with right-wing ideologues and evangelicals of dubious professional qualifications, of whom Dr. David Hager, who advises women that Christian prayer helps PMS, is only the most notorious. And they have invaded the Justice Department, which has issued warrants for the private hospital records of women who have had abortions. Also because of this politicization, the expected decision to make emergency contraception available over the counter has been delayed and may be denied—not because it is a risky medication but because of an unfounded belief that ready access to a pregnancy-preventing drug will make young women promiscuous.

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Emboldened by the encouraging climate at the federal level, the states have become hotbeds of antichoice activism. This past year, flagrantly unconstitutional bans on all or most abortions were considered in fourteen states; South Dakota's failed by a single vote. In all, 558 antichoice measures, a record, were considered around the nation; forty-five were enacted. And it's not just abortion: Sixteen bills were introduced in state legislatures that would require parental notice or consent for a minor to obtain *contraception*; Title X clinics, which provide birth control for low-income women, are being quietly defunded.

Enough is enough. On April 25, some 1,300 progressive and feminist organizations—Planned Parenthood, NARAL Pro-Choice America, NOW, the Feminist Majority, the Black Women's Health Imperative, the ACLU, the NAACP and the Coalition of Labor Union Women among them—will spearhead a massive March for Women's Lives in Washington. It is an impressively broad-based coalition, defying the stereotype of the pro-choice movement as staid, white, middle-aged and middle-class. Championing not just reproductive freedom but women's rights and dignity across the board—compulsory marriage classes for low-income women, anyone?—the march, early word has it, is drawing outraged women and men by the busload and carload from every corner of the nation.

The sleeping giant is waking up—and not a moment too soon.

Buyer's Remorse on Iraq

In cautioning George W. Bush about rushing to war against Iraq, Secretary of State Colin Powell reportedly invoked the "you break it, you own it" rule of military action, according to Bob Woodward in his new book, *Plan of Attack*. "You are going to be the proud owner of 25 million people," Powell is said to have advised Bush. "You will own all their hopes, aspirations and problems. You'll own it all." And indeed for much of the past year the Administration has treated Iraq like an imperial possession, fending off suggestions that the United States needed the help of the United Nations or the legitimacy that its mandate would confer.

But recent developments have begun to force some changes in the White House attitude. With US casualties mounting and resistance growing, the Administration displayed the first signs of buyer's remorse, even as it tried to convince the world of its resolve to "stay the course." Bush applauded the efforts of UN envoy Lakhdar Brahimi to develop a plan for an interim Iraqi government; the White House is reportedly preparing a Security Council resolution outlining a more substantial UN role in the post-transition phase; and it is working hard to bring NATO on board.

The Administration has also begun to take into account the viewpoints of a nascent Iraqi leadership, accepting the intervention of some members of the (admittedly US-selected) Iraqi Governing Council in negotiations with the Falluja insurgents and of Shiite leaders in dealing with radical cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. Indeed, one encouraging development is that Iraqis have seized the initiative in these situations, displaying determination not to let them spin out of control because of ill-advised US military tactics.

We'll have to wait to see whether the new realism is a tactical

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EDITORIALS

retreat from earlier arrogance or a real change in policy. But the Administration will have to go a lot further in relinquishing control if it expects either the UN or NATO to buy into its plan. The UN is understandably wary about assuming more of the burden in Iraq without adequate security arrangements and without more control. UN Security Council members as well as NATO countries are also skeptical of taking over part of the US venture as long as Washington insists on calling the tune behind the scenes. If they are to assume the risks of putting their men and women on the ground, they want to have more say in plans for the transition.

They know that if Washington pursues a strategy that further embitters the Iraqi people, they too will pay the price. Likewise, if Washington continues to reward Israeli expansionism, they too will be implicated. By announcing the withdrawal of its forces on its first day in power, the new Spanish government voted no-confidence in the idea that Washington would revise its plan. Spain—and now the Dominican Republic and Honduras—have concluded they don't want to risk more lives and money on a failed venture. The calculations of other countries, especially those bearing a heavy burden in Afghanistan, are likely to be the same.

The White House seems to believe that other countries will still be moved by the President's rhetoric about bringing democracy to the Iraqi people and, if not, that they don't want to see an unstable Iraq or a failed state in the Middle East. But that assumes they see Iraq with the Administration's eyes—as part of the "war on terrorism" and as part of a noble mission to remake the Middle East—and that they believe a US-led operation can bring about a stable Iraq. Neither of those views is self-evident to other countries. The world has lived with instability in the Persian Gulf caused by the United States before—whether in Lebanon or Iran—and other countries undoubtedly believe they can contain the disorder again, despite heightened concern about Islamic radicalism.

If Washington truly wants to share the burden, the Administration will have to drop the hyperbole about America's godly mission and address the concerns preventing other countries as well as the Iraqi people from moving to rebuild Iraq. To have a chance of success, the June 30 turnover of power must be real—and the US role substantially reduced. The key is not just to internationalize the burden but to turn ownership back to the Iraqi people, however ill prepared they may be for this task. For it is only by letting Iraqis control their own future that we can avoid a humiliating retreat or a further radicalization of the region. It would be better to see that process go forward with the help of the UN and other organizations, but it cannot proceed until this Administration has made clear it is willing to relinquish all claims to ownership of international policy on Iraq.

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COMMENT

Pastrami & Champagne

Three decades ago Winston Churchill's grandson asked Ariel Sharon how Israel should deal with the Palestinians. "We'll make a pastrami sandwich out of them," he replied. "We'll insert a strip of Jewish settlements in between the Palestinians, and then another strip of Jewish settlements right across the West Bank, so that in twenty-five years' time, neither the United Nations nor the United States, nobody, will be able to tear it apart."

Mission accomplished. On April 14 in Washington, Sharon unwrapped his pastrami sandwich and received George W. Bush's seal of approval. Bush supported Israel's retention of several large Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank and said that Palestinian refugees should be resettled in a "Palestinian state"—however notional that "state" might be. In return Sharon promised to evacuate 7,500 Jewish settlers from Gaza as part of a "disengagement" plan that will leave Gaza to Israel's tender mercies, and to remove "certain military installations and settlements" from the West Bank. On his flight back to Israel, Sharon and his colleagues uncorked a bottle of champagne. The celebrations were capped a few days later by an Israeli missile strike killing Hamas leader Abdel Aziz al-Rantisi. Like the assassination of Sheik Ahmed Yassin weeks earlier, Rantisi's killing drew no criticism from the United States, just a decorous call for "restraint."

In hailing Sharon's "bold and courageous decision," Bush was not exactly breaking new ground. Like Bush, President Clinton also argued that Israel should not be expected to withdraw to the 1967 borders and that most Palestinian refugees should eventually resettle in a Palestinian state rather than in Israel. But Palestinian and Israeli negotiators did discuss exchanging parts of the West Bank for commensurate parts of Israel proper. The effect of Bush's speech is to remove large settlement blocs from the negotiating table, thus condoning Israel's unilateral land grabs. Similarly, the Palestinian refugee question has always been considered a final-status issue, to be resolved in negotiations and not by Israeli and US fiat.

Reaction from our erstwhile European allies was swift and furious. "The European Union will not recognize any change to the pre-1967 borders other than those arrived at by agreement between the parties," said EU spokesman Brian Cowen, the Irish foreign minister. Presidential hopeful John Kerry, on the other hand, showed a disappointing deference to the Israel lobby, praising the Bush-Sharon plan and repeating the shibboleth that "Israel has no partner." He also vigorously defended the assassination of Rantisi, which is all but certain to be followed by others: Determined to prove that Israel is not leaving Gaza in the face of resistance, as it did in southern Lebanon in May 2000, Sharon has vowed to continue his assassination campaign.

At the same time, Sharon is trying to present himself as a man

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of peace, prepared to make "painful concessions." That is where the Gaza plan comes in. Far from representing a withdrawal, the "disengagement" is an extension of war by other means. If the plan goes forward, Gaza will be "demilitarized and devoid of armaments," and it will have no airport or seaport without Israel's approval. Israel "reserves" the right to cut off Gaza's supply lines and to invade at any time, and "will continue to maintain a military presence" along the Egyptian border, thus isolating Gaza from its only Arab neighbor.

The aim of the Gaza plan is to eliminate Israel's responsibility for its 1.3 million inhabitants while strengthening its grip on the West Bank. Israel plans to annex roughly 55 percent of the West Bank, leaving the rest as bantustans surrounded by Israel's "separation" wall and connected by roads, bridges and tunnels. This is the future Palestinian "state" to which Bush proposes that millions of refugees be relocated. As Akiva Elder of *Ha'aretz* notes, "the political, military and economic aspects of the plan...are amazingly similar to the homelands" in apartheid South Africa.

Sharon may be toasting his agreement with the Bush Administration, but his pastrami sandwich is a recipe for continued warfare. In the short term, the effect will be to strengthen the hard-liners in the Palestinian community, who argue that only violent resistance will end the occupation. Even if Hamas's retaliatory capacity has diminished over the past year, the killings of Yassin and Rantisi will eventually spark considerable blowback against Israel, and against its American patrons. Even more troubling, the long-term effect of Sharon's sandwich is to further undermine the prospects for a just peace based on two sovereign states. A true friend of Israel would pressure Sharon to restart negotiations with the Palestinians and to end Israel's thirty-seven-year occupation. In this sense, Israeli peace activist Uri Avnery is right: Bush is "the most anti-Israeli American president there ever was, because the Sharon-Bush plan is blocking the way to Israeli-Palestinian peace, our only hope for a normal life." ROANE CAREY AND ADAM SHATZ

CALVIN TRILLIN

WE WERE READY

(Sung to the 9/11 Commission by the Bush Boys' Choir, to the tune of "I Feel Pretty" from West Side Story*)*

CHORUS
We were ready—
Oh, so ready.
Sure, it happened, but those were the breaks.
And remember
That we never, ever make mistakes.

Sure, some mornings
Bush got warnings
To beware of some terror by air—
Just vague warnings,
And the numbers of the flights weren't there.

SOLO BY JOHN ASHCROFT
Yes, that FBI guy did say I
Wished terror reports left unsaid.
What a terrible lie!
From the FBI!
With my go-ahead,
God will strike him dead!

CHORUS
We were ready—
Oh, so ready.
To repulse any foreign assault.
So what happened
Really had to be Bill Clinton's fault.

Bush's New Iraq Viceroy

Like dirty money, tainted reputations can be laundered, as the Administration fervently hopes in the case of John Negroponte. Now UN ambassador, Negroponte has been chosen by George W. Bush to be the first ambassador to post-Saddam Iraq. When Bush selected Negroponte to be his UN representative in 2001, Negroponte was one of several Iran/*contra* figures being resurrected by the Bush crowd. As Honduras ambassador in the early 1980s, Negroponte, a career diplomat, participated in a secret and possibly illegal quid pro quo in which the Reagan Administration bribed the Honduran government with economic and military assistance to support the *contras* fighting the socialist Sandinistas of Nicaragua. Perhaps more significant, while Negroponte served in Honduras, he denied or downplayed serious human rights abuses by government security forces. This past threatened his confirmation as UN ambassador. But 9/11 rescued Negroponte. At the time of the attack, his nomination was pending, and the Senate moved quickly to approve him.

These days Negroponte's tenure in Honduras is old news. The *Washington Post*'s front-page story on his nomination did not mention his stint there. Senate staffers say that his record in Honduras won't be a focus of the confirmation hearings. But his tour of duty there *is* worth scrutiny, for it raises questions about his credibility and his ability to handle tough situations and inconvenient truths. While he was in Honduras and for years afterward, Negroponte refused to acknowledge the human rights abuses. In a 1982 letter to *The Economist* he said it was "simply untrue to state that death squads have made their appearance in Honduras." The next year he maintained, "There is no indication that the infrequent human rights violations that do occur are part of deliberate government policy." And during his 2001 confirmation he stated, "I do not believe then, nor do I believe now, that these abuses were part of a deliberate government policy. To this day, I do not believe that death squads were operating in Honduras." How then does he account

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JONATHAN SCHELL

Truth and Politics

Halfway through Tim Russert's hourlong interview with Democratic presidential nominee Senator John Kerry on April 18, there was an exchange that revealed in microcosm some of the fundamental unspoken rules of American politics in our day. Russert played a clip from Kerry's 1971 appearance on *Meet the Press* following his testimony as a leader of Vietnam Veterans Against the War before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. A long-haired Kerry, in uniform, was seen saying that he stood by the essence of his testimony, in which he had said that veterans had admitted they had "raped, cut off ears, cut off heads, taped wires from portable telephones to human genitals and turned up the power." He added that under the Geneva Conventions such acts were war crimes.

Russert did not play the tape to congratulate Kerry for his truth-telling. On the contrary, he was clearly calling him on the carpet. He even suggested that "a lot" of Kerry's allegations had been discredited. In fact, every word that Kerry spoke then has been shown to be true in an abundance of testimony. Even now, new revelations pour out. For example, the *Toledo Blade* just won the Pulitzer Prize for unearthing the story of an army company that went on a seven-month rampage in Vietnam, routinely killing peasants, burning villages, cutting off the ears of corpses. Troops in the field can hardly engage in such conduct over a period of months without the knowledge and at least tacit approval of higher authority.

Kerry answered warily. He began by trying to make light of the clip. "Where did all that dark hair go?—that's a big question for me," he joked. He went on to say that although some of his language had been "excessive," he was still proud of the stand he had taken. His predicament is worth pondering. The powers that be, with the approval of mainstream opinion, had sent him into a misbegotten war whose awful reality they covered up. When he helped uncover it, it was not they but he who was punished. In short, by sending young men into an atrocious, mistaken war, they created a truth so distasteful to the public that its disclosure, by discrediting the discloser, keeps them in power.

Was Kerry "flip-flopping"—the Bush Administration's main campaign charge against him? Was he all-too-characteristically trying to back off from a position he had once taken while at the same time embracing it? And didn't this performance echo his complicated and equivocal stance on the Iraq war, in which he has said that his vote in the Senate to authorize the President to use armed force against Iraq was "not a vote to go to war" and that in 2003 he voted "for" the $87 billion supplemental authorization for the war "before" he voted "against it" (a statement the Republicans are making political hay with in a current TV ad)?

Kerry's equivocations are indeed related. For if as a soldier in Vietnam in 1968 and '69 he was brought face to face with one reality—the human reality of the war—then as a presidential candidate in 2004 he has been driven up against another—the political reality that no antiwar candidate of modern times has ever made it into the White House. One might think that Kerry's good sense and bravery in opposing the Vietnam War three decades ago might stand him in good stead today. (How many Americans now think getting into Vietnam was a good idea?) But as the Russert interview shows, just the opposite is the case. It is Kerry's bravery as a soldier fighting the mistaken war, not his bravery as a veteran opposing it, that helps him in his bid for the presidency.

And so just as Kerry bowed to political reality by distancing himself from his old testimony while expressing continued pride in it, so he bowed to that same reality by voting for the Iraq authorization (while expressing opposition to "the way" the President went to war). Even today he will not acknowledge that his vote—and the war—were a mistake. Kerry is stuck between politics and truth.

After the Congressional vote on the war, however, a peculiar thing happened. Kerry's political sails, far from filling with a fresh breeze, began to flap idly in the wind. Polls and pundits agreed: His nomination was dead in the water.

The action shifted elsewhere. For while opposition to a crazy war might not be a ticket to the White House, it was still good for something. It swelled a powerful popular movement. Huge demonstrations against the war took place in the United States, as they did throughout the world. In the time of Vietnam, antiwar sentiment propelled first Eugene McCarthy, then Robert Kennedy and later George McGovern into the forefront of Democratic politics. Now antiwar sentiment propelled Howard Dean into his brief moment of front-runnership. In the game of politics and truth, truth was sneaking in the back door. Suddenly, everyone was saying that the Democratic Party had recovered its energy, its "backbone."

But then came another surprising twist. A shrewd, or possibly over-shrewd, Democratic primary electorate, steaming with indignation against the war but apparently fearful of history's lesson that the antiwar man cannot win, shifted its allegiance from Dean to Kerry. All at once, the apparently political calculation that had underlain Kerry's vote for the war in the first place paid off, and he became the candidate.

Such is the archeology of the dilemma that Kerry and the Democratic Party face today. Their flip-flopping, which is real enough, is between the truth as they see it and politics as they know it to be. The party is an antiwar party that dares not speak its name. Its candidate is energized, but with a borrowed energy. He has a backbone, but it is a borrowed backbone.

The antiwar movement that has lent Kerry and his party this energy and this backbone faces a dilemma, too. On the one hand, it needs Kerry to win, even though he refuses to repent his vote to authorize the war. On the other hand, neither the movement nor Kerry can afford to let the antiwar energies that were and remain a principal source of their hopes and his die down. The movement must persist, independent of Kerry and keeping him or making him honest, yet not opposing him. If truth must be an exile from the mainstream of politics, let it thrive on the margins.

Jonathan Schell, Harold Willens Peace Fellow at the Nation Institute, is the author, most recently, of The Unconquerable World: Power, Nonviolence, and the Will of the People *(Metropolitan).*

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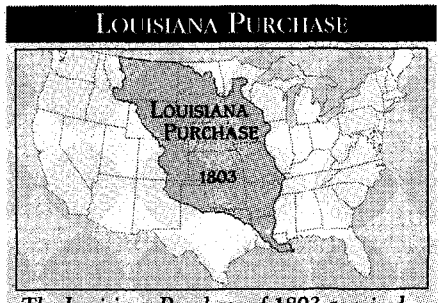

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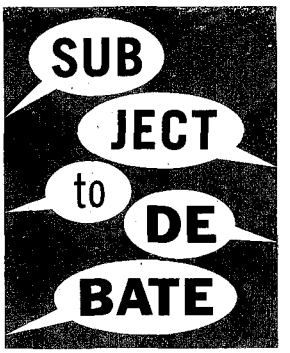
KATHA POLLITT

Down and Out in Texas



Did you know that since January 1, women in Texas have not been able to obtain abortions from the sixteenth week of pregnancy on? This blackout on women's rights and health is happening not because abortions after the fourth month were declared illegal—far from it: In theory, all that has changed is a bureaucratic regulation included in a bundle of antiabortion legislation, HB15. Most of the provisions in HB15, which sailed through the Republican-dominated state legislature, are familiar: There's a twenty-four-hour waiting period and a requirement that clinics offer a flower-decorated pamphlet called *A Woman's Right to Know*, which suggests a link between abortion and breast cancer, stresses the possibility of psychological damage and gives the death rate for abortions performed at various stages of pregnancy. The bill also requires providers to photocopy patients' IDs and keep them on file.

The killer provision, though, is the one that has received the least press coverage: Beginning with the sixteenth week of pregnancy, abortions can no longer take place in clinics—they must now be performed in a hospital or an ambulatory surgical center. The catch is, Texas hospitals, many of which are Catholic, do almost no abortions, and of the state's 273 surgicenters not one performs the procedure or plans to take it on. For a clinic to qualify as a surgical center it would have to meet hundreds of architectural specifications at a cost of well over a million dollars. "There's nothing about these abortions that requires these regulations," says Sarah Wheat, director of public affairs at TARAL, the state's NARAL affiliate. "They were presented as necessary for women's health, but women's health organizations opposed them."

What happens when the only facilities that can legally provide abortions after sixteen weeks won't, and the only facilities that want to provide them are legally barred from doing so? Thousands of Texas girls and women suffer. The law is written so tightly—no exceptions even to save the woman's life—that clinics have no wiggle room, says Amy Hagstrom Miller, who owns the Whole Woman's Health Clinic in Austin and another in McAllen, near the Mexican border. In fact, many clinics have stopped doing abortions after fourteen weeks just to be on the safe side. Miller has been referring three or four women a week to clinics in Louisiana, Arkansas and Kansas. (Paradoxically, HB15 has meant plenty of work for Wichita's Dr. George Tiller, whom antichoicers consider the Antichrist.) "Anyone I refer is at least eight hours away from an out-of-state clinic. It's a real burden on them. The majority don't make the trip—it's too expensive." Even if the two clinics now considering an upgrade manage to pull it off, the state is so huge that most women will be left in the cold.

The vast majority of women who terminate their pregnancies do so quickly: 88 percent of abortions are performed before the twelfth week; 96 percent before the sixteenth week. Most who wait that long are young, poor or both: teens in denial about what's happening to their bodies, women trapped in abusive situations, rural women without transportation, women who spend the first trimester chasing the money to pay for the procedure even as delay drives up the price. These women have little political power and get little sympathy from those who do. Along with the stealthy nature of the regulation, that helps explain the lack of furor over what is a ban in all but name. Another Chicana tenth grader has a baby; who gets all worked up about that?

Even the most privileged woman, though, can have a wanted pregnancy that goes terribly wrong. Amniocentesis, still the main method for detecting genetic defects, yields its results well after the Texas cutoff date. Think about it: You get the worst news about your baby a doctor can give—it has Tay-Sachs disease, say, which means it will die, horribly, by age 3—and the State of Texas shrugs its shoulders. Or you find that your health or even your life is suddenly at risk—and the State of Texas washes its hands of you. Recently, Miller says, she got a call from a woman who had aborted a much-wanted pregnancy because the fetus had defects incompatible with life. What would happen to her today, the caller wondered? Would she have to go through a whole pregnancy in order to deliver a dying baby? How is "life" served by that?

HB15 is a flagrant violation of *Roe v. Wade*, which allows states to regulate second-trimester abortions only to protect women's health; if ever there was an "undue burden" on women's ability to access abortion, this is it. Eventually, it may be thrown out in court—but how many girls and women will have been forced to bear children by then? How many will have injured their health and risked, perhaps even lost, their lives? There's a bigger agenda here, too: Around the nation, antichoicers are proposing bills that contradict *Roe* in hopes of providing the Supreme Court with an occasion to overturn it down the road, when George W. Bush has had his chance to alter the balance of the Court.

Texas is a conservative state, where the religious right is strong. In Austin, Planned Parenthood has had to become its own contractor on building a new clinic when local contractors boycotted the project. In Denton, an Eckerd pharmacist refused to fill a rape victim's prescription for emergency contraception, and a CVS pharmacist refused to refill a prescription for ordinary birth control pills. Waco recently made the news when locals organized a boycott of Girl Scout cookies to protest the scouts' endorsement of Planned Parenthood sex-ed programs. But Texas is also a big, rich, modern state: Houston and Dallas are the fourth- and eighth-largest cities in the country. If abortion access can be denied across the board in Texas, where will it happen next? Utah, for one, is moving in that direction: A law just enacted by the legislature cuts off state funding to any agency (including hospitals) that performs an abortion except in cases of rape, incest or "permanent, irreparable and grave damage" to the woman. As a result, Salt Lake City's University Hospital has announced that it will no longer terminate pregnancies involving fatal fetal deformities.

You can support reproductive rights in Texas with a donation to the Lilith Fund (www.lilithfund.org; PO Box 684949, Austin, TX 78768), which helps low-income women pay for abortions. ■

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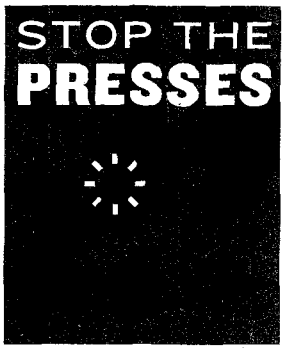
ERIC ALTERMAN

Woodward Returns



Well, Bob Woodward has partially redeemed himself. His last book, *Bush at War*, read like a superhero comic book mistranslated from its original Serbo-Croatian. Everyone in the Bush Administration was portrayed as they might have wished: brave, steadfast, determined to protect America from evildoerdom, no matter the cost.

Because Colin Powell and his aides evidently decided to tiptoe off the reservation in preparation for their long-overdue departure, the new book, *Plan of Attack*, has texture. There are conflicts. Not everybody can be right about everything. And while the book does gloss over many of the Administration's most nefarious characteristics—its serial dishonesty with Congress and the media, for instance—the trust Woodward earned with his hagiographic first account put him in good stead to expand our understanding of how these people go about making their catastrophic decisions and then denying them. Here's what I learned:

1. For foreign policy purposes, Dick Cheney is President: Cheney wanted this war from way back when; it was Bush who needed convincing. As *Slate*'s Tim Noah points out, "The closest Woodward comes to showing Bush making a final decision is when Bush pulls Rumsfeld aside in early January 2003 and says, 'Look, we're going to have to do this I'm afraid. I don't see how we're going to get him to a position where he will do something in a manner that's consistent with the UN requirements, and we've got to make an assumption that he will not.'" When the President is not around, Administration officials refer to Cheney as "the Man," as in, "The Man wants this" or "The Man thinks that."

2. That's too bad, because unfortunately Cheney is nuts. As Powell puts it, Cheney was in the grip of a "fever," no longer the "steady, unemotional rock that he had witnessed a dozen years earlier during the run-up to the Gulf War. The vice president was beyond hell-bent for action against Saddam. It was as if nothing else existed." Woodward gives us the backstory: Cheney, confirmed by his equally fevered aide "Scooter" Libby, repeatedly pitched—as he does today—the apparently imaginary meeting between Mohamed Atta and Iraqi intelligence in Prague. Powell/Woodward aptly term this contention "worse than ridiculous." It goes on. "Cheney would take an intercept and say it shows something was happening. No, no, no, Powell or another would say, it shows that somebody talked to somebody else who said something *might* be happening. A conversation would suggest something might be happening, and Cheney would convert that into a 'We know.'"

3. Rumsfeld's Pentagon, led by Paul Wolfowitz and Douglas Feith, caught Cheney's nutty fever too. The war party in the Pentagon was no less obsessed than Cheney and Libby with finding the nonexistent link between Iraq and Al Qaeda. Powell considered them to be "a separate little government" and referred to them as the "Gestapo office."

4. George W. Bush cannot be bothered to listen to the views of those with whom he disagrees, even (particularly?) people who clearly know a great deal more about the topic than he does and hold Cabinet responsibility for it. Bush told Woodward that when he saw Powell for twelve minutes in the Oval Office on January 13, 2003, it was "not a meeting to have a discussion. This was a meeting to tell Colin Powell that a decision had been made and that the president wanted his support."

5. Which is also too bad, because Bush lives in a dream world. This from the transcript of *Larry King Live*:

WOODWARD:...I said, OK, you've found no weapons of mass destruction, and one of my bosses at "The Post" said, The question is, did you deceive us or were you deceived? And I got two very emphatic, No. No.

KING: On both?

WOODWARD: On both.

6. The United States Constitution is meaningless to these people: The Bush Administration decided to lay out $700 million on a "massive, covert public works program" in Kuwait in 2002, even though, as Woodward aptly notes, they did not inform Congress. This is a violation of Article 1, Section 9, Clause 7 of the Constitution, which vests the power of the purse in Congress, along with various statutes that bar the executive from unilaterally moving money out of areas explicitly mandated by spending bills. It is, moreover, an explicit violation of the post-9/11 emergency supplemental bill, which gave the President discretion to direct the $40 billion it appropriated but specifically required him to "consult with the chairmen and ranking minority members of the Committees on Appropriations prior to the transfer" of any funds. There is no evidence of any such consultation, and indeed the White House is not claiming any exists.

The Administration has reacted to this revelation with (a) dishonesty: On CBS's *Face the Nation*, Condoleezza Rice tried to argue that "resources were not taken from Afghanistan." This is false—Bush removed Special Forces from Afghanistan in 2002 to send them to Iraq, as David Sirota of the Center for American Progress notes; and (b) disingenuousness and more dishonesty: White House deputy press secretary Trent Duffy told an interviewer that the "significant buildup" in the Persian Gulf region before the war was not necessarily preparation for an invasion. (Apparently it was in preparation for a regional swim meet, to be held on a date yet to be determined.) Duffy also said the Administration wanted to be ready to aid weapons inspectors. This is ridiculous. The record demonstrates that the White House went out of its way to undercut the weapons inspectors in order to justify its obsession with war. For the past year, the goofball President of the United States and his Defense Secretary have been denying that inspectors were ever even allowed inside Iraq—something that goes all but unreported in the US media because reporters apparently find it too weird (see my last column).

There's plenty more in *Plan of Attack*, like the Saudis playing with our elections and stuff, but those are the lowlights. Read it and weep. ■

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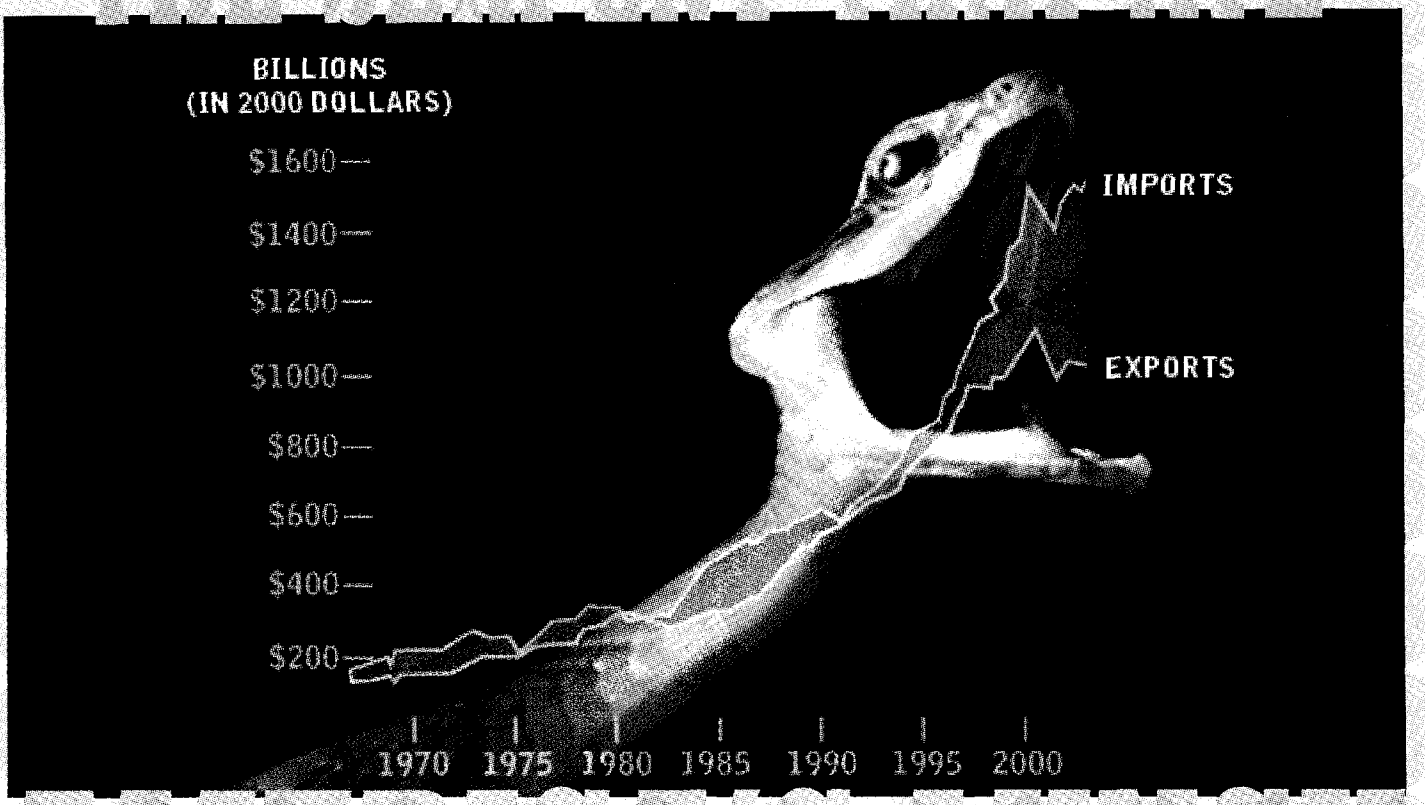
ARTICLES

THE SERPENT THAT ATE AMERICA'S LUNCH



WILLIAM GREIDER

The backstory for this election year lacks the urgency of war or of defeating George W. Bush but focuses on a most fateful question: When will this hemorrhaging debtor nation be compelled to pull back from profligate consumption and resign its role as "buyer of last resort" for the global economy? The smart money assumes such a momentous reckoning probably won't occur in time to disrupt Bush's re-election campaign, but it may well become the dominating crisis in the next presidential term, whoever is elected. At that point, the United States will lose its aura of unilateral superiority, and globalization will be forced to undergo wrenching change. The American economy, in other words, is in much deeper trouble than most people realize.

The facts are not secret. Despite ebbs and surges, the gap between US exports and imports has been steadily widening across three decades. The trade deficits of the early 1970s (due mainly to soaring oil prices) were trivial in size, but Americans were shocked in 1978 when the deficit hit $30 billion (TV sets and some cars were now made in Japan). During the 1980s, the trade deficit expanded enormously, as Washington's strong-dollar policy crippled US manufacturers and companies moved jobs and production offshore in swelling volume. After a recession and dollar devaluation, the gap shrank briefly, but soon began expanding again.

For several decades, in fact, the federal government has tolerated and even encouraged the dispersal of American production overseas—first to secure allies during the cold war, later to advance the fortunes of US multinationals. No other major economy in the world accepts perennial trade deficits; some maintain huge surpluses. But American leaders and policy-makers are uniquely dedicated to a faith in "free market" globalization, and they have regularly promised Americans that despite the disruptions, this policy guarantees their long-term prosperity. Present facts make these long-held convictions look like gross illusion. By 1998, the trade deficit was back to a new high and expanding ferociously, despite supposed improvements in US competitiveness. Last year it set another new record: $489 billion.

Yet no one running for President has found the nerve to discuss these facts in a straightforward manner. Nor do the candidates have anything to say about how the country might avoid a potential calamity. A few wise heads in finance, like billionaire investor Warren Buffett, have sounded the alarm—Buffett refers to the United States as "Squanderville" and is shifting billions offshore into foreign currencies for safety. Meanwhile, political leaders remain silent.

The US economy, in essence, is being kept afloat by enormous foreign lending so that consumers can keep buying more

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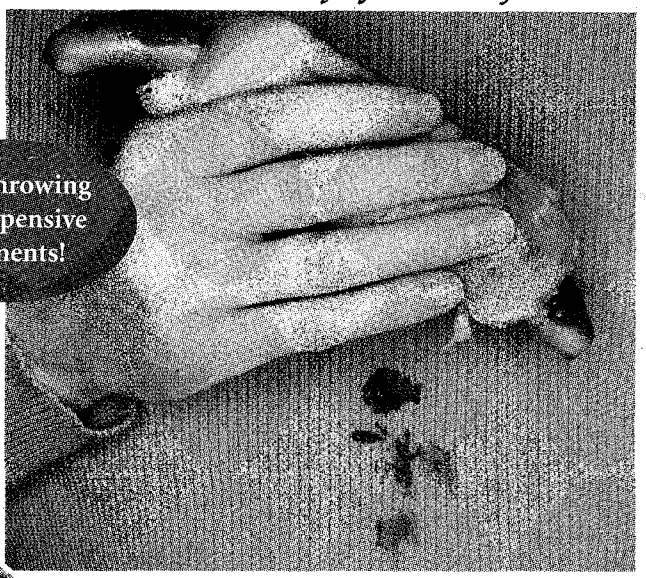

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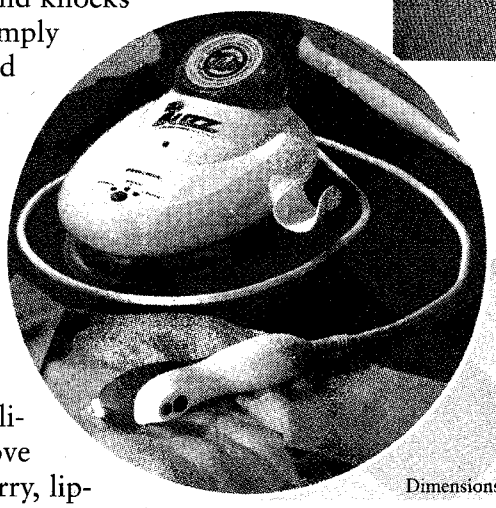

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imports, thus increasing the bloated trade deficits. This lopsided arrangement will end when those foreign creditors—major trading partners like Japan, China and Europe—decide to stop the lending or simply reduce it substantially.

That reckoning could arrive as a sudden thunderclap of financial crisis—spiking interest rates, swooning stock market and crashing home prices. More likely it will be less dramatic but equally painful. As foreign capital moves elsewhere and easy credit disappears for consumers, many Americans will experience a major decline in their living standards—a gradual grinding-down process that could continue for years. If the US government reacts passively and allows "market forces" to make these adjustments, the consequences will be especially severe for the less affluent—families already stretched by stagnating wages and too much borrowing.

Normally, I wouldn't use an economic chart to make my point, but the one you see on page 11 tells the story of America's predicament more effectively than words. Prepared by University of Wisconsin economist Menzie Chinn (and illustrated by Stephen Kling/Avenging Angels), with dollar values adjusted to remove the distortions of price inflation, it's a visual display of the US economy's performance in the global trading system during the past three decades. Year by year, it traces the line of US imports versus the line of US exports. The red ink in between represents America's trade deficits.

The reckoning could arrive as a sudden thunderclap of financial crisis; more likely it will be less dramatic but equally painful.

The red ink, as you can see, is exploding. The thick red blob in the upper right-hand corner represents our present condition—the record trade deficits of recent years. Starting six or seven years ago, these two lines diverged dramatically: The volume of imports soared, while export growth leveled off. Historically, when a mature economy suffers perennial trade deficits, it is usually understood as a sign of weakness, especially if the deficits keep getting larger.

The red ink can also be read as a rough approximation of America's indebtedness to the rest of the world. Last year the US economy (business and households as well as the federal government) was compelled to borrow $540 billion from overseas creditors. Since the United States first became a debtor nation fifteen years ago, it has accumulated nearly $3 trillion in debt obligations abroad. At the current pace, the foreign debt load will double again in the next six or seven years. You can see why we have depicted the debt as a serpent, rising to strike. The serpent, I suggest, is biting the debtor nation that has fed it. Actually, it ate our lunch.

Leading authorities typically explain what is happening by observing correctly that Americans are collectively "overconsuming"—that is, living beyond their means—but experts assume that "market forces" will eventually correct the situation. Once the global economy regains robust growth, it is said, other nations will buy more US exports. Or, once the dollar has depreciated in value sufficiently, Americans will buy fewer imports. Some even claim the indebtedness is America's good fortune—a sign of strength that other nations are so eager to finance US consumption.

I think the authorities are wrong. When I look at the chart, I see the United States sinking into financial dependency—dangerously indebted to rival nations that are holding our debt paper, collecting the interest on Treasury bonds and private bank loans, or repatriating the profits from companies that used to be American-owned. A very wealthy nation can tolerate this negative toll for many years, but not forever. Unless the historic meaning of debt has been repealed, no nation can borrow endlessly from others without sooner or later forfeiting control of its destiny, and also losing the economic foundations of its general prosperity.

The world at large will be better off, in my view, when Washington is compelled to accept a less dominating role and global political power is dispersed more multilaterally. But the transition itself could be an unsettling, even dangerous time, since the declining economic power also happens to be the pre-eminent military power. In any case, an American reckoning would also have economic consequences for the rest of the world. If the United States were to tap out, the global system would lose its best customer. American consumers have propped up global trade with their open-ended purchases. Now the rest of the world is propping up American consumers, lending them the money to buy still more.

The endgame might be triggered by any number of events—including the financial exhaustion of America's overextended consumers—but the most likely venue is the global trade in capital, not the trade in goods and services. In theory, wealthy countries are expected to ship investment capital to poorer countries to build factories and infrastructure. But at present, most of the world's capital is flowing in reverse: The net inflow of foreign capital to the United States represents a staggering 75 percent of the net outflows from the rest of the world, according to economist Jane D'Arista of the Financial Markets Center. Even more abnormal is that nearly one-fourth of this lending comes from emerging-market nations, led by China, whose trade surplus with America has surpassed Japan's.

Both China and Japan are prodigious financiers of US consumption—the two largest foreign holders of US Treasury bonds—despite the weak returns they get from low US interest rates. China and Japan are willing to do this because they calculate that sustaining their own industrial output and employment is worth more than seeking stronger financial returns elsewhere.

All sides recognize a self-interest in keeping the game going—avoiding a global meltdown that might ruin everyone. But the anticipated benefits from this cooperation are very different: The US consumes in the present, through indebtedness that it must repay from future production; the others accumulate financial wealth now and expand their industrial capabilities to produce in the future.

The Bush Administration must convince its major trading partners, especially China and Japan, to stay at the table and keep lending huge sums even as it encourages the dollar's decline in the hope of boosting US exports, discouraging imports from Asia and Europe and thus shrinking America's trade gap (with little success so far).

The poker game ends when one major player or another

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decides it has gotten the last dollar off the table and it's time to go home. Creditor nations naturally have the upper hand, like any banker who can call the loan when he sees the borrower is hopelessly mired. But the decision to exit might be dictated by necessity more than bad faith. China, for instance, is booming, with a banking system riddled with bad loans to its domestic enterprises. If a banking crisis developed, Beijing might have no choice but to sell off its US bonds and use the capital at home to stabilize its financial system or to assuage political unrest among its unemployed masses. Tokyo has for some years anticipated an eventual American reckoning but hoped to keep the United States from doing anything rash until the Asian sphere was strong enough to prosper on its own, without depending so heavily on American consumers.

What might be done to avoid the worst? The necessary first step is for American politicians to cast aside the propagandistic claims advanced by multinational business and finance and endorsed by policy elites and orthodox economists. For decades, globalization advocates insisted, for example, that the solution to America's trade deficits was more "free trade." Each new trade agreement has been heralded as a market-opening breakthrough that would boost US exports and thus move toward balanced trade. That is not what happened—not after NAFTA (1993) and the WTO (1994), nor after China normalization (2000). In each case, the trade deficits grew dramatically. (Yes, it's true that since the early 1970s US export volume has grown by more than five times, but import volume has grown by eight times.) Economists have also claimed that ending deficit spending by the federal government would eliminate the trade gap. Yet when the federal government's budget did finally come into balance in 1999, the trade deficits were exploding. This discredited explanation is nonetheless being recycled, now that huge federal deficits have been spectacularly revived by the Bush Administration.

Across three decades, only one economic event has been guaranteed to produce balanced US trade: a recession.

The humbling reality is this: Across three decades, only one economic event has been guaranteed to produce balanced US trade: a recession. When the economy is contracting, people naturally buy less of everything, including imports. Look at the chart: On the four occasions when the line of exports briefly converged with the line of imports, the country was in recession. Each time economic growth was restored, the trade deficits resumed. A more ominous contradiction occurred during the 2001 recession: The trade gap was so enormous it persisted throughout. This suggests that American dependency on foreign producers has advanced to a dangerous new level.

The failure of conventional explanations for trade deficits leads, logically, to an unorthodox conclusion: The source of the deficits (and growing indebtedness) must be embedded in the trading system itself, independent of shifts in macroeconomic conditions, and so it is there we must also look for solutions. The national ambitions and competitive energies of globalization, at least as currently practiced, persist in developing new productive capacity—more factories—faster than they generate rising incomes and adequate demand to absorb the surplus of goods. This leads inevitably to falling prices and stiffer pressures for cost reductions. The convenient remedy—somebody, somewhere has to shut down factories—has typically begun by closing America's and moving its high-wage production offshore for cheaper labor.

American production usually goes first because the US government does not resist and US multinationals gain from the transaction, even if the US labor force does not. Indeed, the multinationals are major actors in generating America's trade deficits, since they "export" and "import" within the firms themselves—shipping components and materials back and forth between their overseas subsidiaries and US-based plants. Trade is commonly described as between nations, but fully half of US foreign trade, excluding oil, is composed of these intrafirm transactions. This reality explains the interconnection between trade deficits and job losses: When an American company moves production to Mexico or China, it still counts the output as its own, but its labor costs are reduced drastically while its foreign-manufactured products becomes imports, adding to the trade deficit and accumulating foreign debt. For years, advocates have dismissed worries about deficits in manufactured goods by pointing to the smaller but growing surplus in services. As more service jobs are offshored, however, that surplus is shrinking rapidly too, declining from $90 billion to $60 billion over the past seven years.

Of course, other advanced economies face the same global pressures and engage in the same sort of dispersal when required, but their governments (and societies) do not yield so willingly. Through industrial policy and numerous informal barriers, America's European rivals have managed to avoid both trade deficits and the thirty-year stagnation of wages that US industrial workers have suffered. Only in America do the experts believe these consequences have no meaning for overall prosperity. Only in America has the government put the interests of multinationals ahead of citizens.

A decisive President, one who grasped the gravity of the situation, would start by bringing up a taboo subject—tariffs—and inform the world that the United States is prepared to impose a temporary general tariff of 10 or 15 percent on all US imports. Every multinational would have to rethink its industrial strategy, because some of its production might be stranded in the wrong country. Import-dependent retailers like Wal-Mart would be seriously disrupted, too.

The idea of tariffs is so alien to conventional wisdom it probably sounds illegal. Actually, a nondiscriminatory general tariff is permitted under the original GATT agreement for a nation to correct grave financial imbalances—exactly the problem America is facing. Richard Nixon stunned the world in 1971 when he abruptly announced a 10 percent import surcharge, devalued the dollar and unilaterally discarded the Bretton Woods monetary system. America needs a bit of Nixonian nerve.

With a general tariff, the practice of wage arbitrage—shifting high-wage jobs to low-wage nations, then selling the goods to the US market—would no longer be a free ride. If the US market were less wide-open, globalization could continue, but countries

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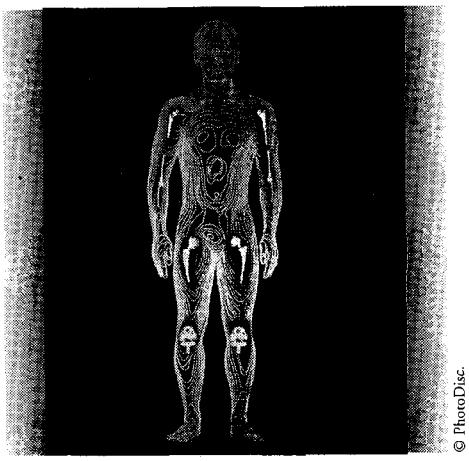

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"When the structure of the body is looked at in the context of its function, then the journey is one of wonder and excitement. Equipped with a few basic definitions and an armful of charts, a solid understanding of human anatomy and physiology is well within the grasp of anyone with an interest. When anatomy and physiology are looked at as a unit, there is immediately apparent a logic and symmetry to our bodies, ourselves. We can easily begin to see how we function, and why, at times, we fail. We can understand health and we can understand illness. We can converse with our physicians, and we can understand their counsel."

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and companies would need to disperse production on different assumptions. They might finally confront the central dilemma of inadequate global demand versus the permanent overabundance of supply.

The fundamental solution is to raise wages everywhere in the world, with perhaps fewer millionaires but a more generalized prosperity, especially in developing nations. In short, the global system needs more workers with the incomes to buy what they make. Globalization would have to proceed at a more moderate pace, with less rip-and-run disruption, financial crisis and social disorder. It is most unlikely, I have to add, that America's governing elites will come around to such drastic measures in time to avert an end-of-era reckoning.

If a full-blown crisis does occur, the macroeconomic challenge would be unlike anything the United States has faced in more than half a century. While this would be a time of wrenching, painful change, the new adverse circumstances might also inspire a great shift toward a new, more progressive politics. Given our rapidly deteriorating condition, it is not too soon to begin considering how the nation might dig out, lest popular confusion and bitterness generate reactionary politics instead.

The first imperative—an unavoidable necessity—would be to suppress consumption through credit-restraining measures, fiscal caution or tax reform, and to stimulate greater domestic savings, yet somehow to keep the economy growing. If this great adjustment is left to market forces alone, the predictable consequences will be to punish the innocent—struggling households and small businesses—first.

If a full-blown crisis does occur, the macroeconomic challenge would be unlike anything America has faced in more than half a century.

Thus, the second imperative would be to confront inequality aggressively, through progressive taxation and other measures. An interlude of mild austerity will seem more tolerable if people know the sacrifices are genuinely shared by all.

The principle of equity also matches the economics. With consumption suppressed, far greater investment spending will be needed to sustain the economy—an ambitious agenda of public and private investments. After decades of obsession with global competition, the country's wealth and ingenuity will be refocused inward—rebuilding and expanding the public infrastructure and common assets all citizens need and use (education, healthcare, transportation, energy, the environment). But the investment also would be aimed at long-term redevelopment of the economy, force-feeding new industrial sectors. Not coincidentally, this will generate millions of new jobs not subject to export.

The jump-shift strategy I am describing would be the economic equivalent of wartime, without the bombing and killing. Indeed, the closest precedent is World War II, an extraordinary era of economic development that virtually shut down many forms of domestic consumption (cars and housing) while the government's spending on war production launched major new industries (electronics, petrochemicals, modern aircraft and many others). Essentially, accelerated investment and forced savings replaced consumer spending as the leading fuel for economic growth. After the war, pent-up desires and needs became the economic demand that drove the long postwar era of prosperity.

War mobilizations encourage national cohesion, but the need for solidarity can also create a political consensus to enact greater social and economic guarantees to citizens. In that sense, World War II was a seedbed for postwar reform and lasting social change: The GI Bill, which universalized access to higher education, broadened home ownership and the initial political agitations for what became the civil rights movement. In Britain, wartime solidarity produced bipartisan agreement to enact national health insurance. If the United States must accept a period of shared sacrifice, the experience can similarly create commitments to enact fundamental measures involving health, education and other social needs once the financial cloud has lifted.

An important difference from the World War II example, however, is that the reconstruction could not be financed primarily through deficit spending, given that the country is already burdened by growing indebtedness and the objective would be to reverse that trend. Financing would come, most obviously, from the revival of steeply progressive taxation. But private capital can also be pushed to invest in neglected domestic priorities. For example:

§ An "invest or else" wealth tax, quite modest in size, would give the largest wealth-holders and financial institutions this choice: Either pay the wealth tax or invest an equivalent amount in a priority list of long-term public improvements, from high-speed rail to renewable energy systems, these projects to be pursued as both private ventures and public programs. Alternatively, one's "wealth tax due" could be invested in ten-year, low-yield, inflation-proof government bonds that provide cheaper financing for softer projects like revitalizing education, from early infancy to midlife job-skills training.

§ Progressive taxation could be restored through a graduated consumption tax, replacing the deformed federal income tax. The tax rate on consumption would rise steeply by income class, but generous deductions for necessary household living expenses would effectively exempt most families on the bottom half of the income ladder. They might still be taxed on their consumption through value-added taxes collected at points of sale, much like Europe's. Either system could discreetly encourage more responsible choices by favoring less wasteful and damaging products, while lucrative tax-avoidance schemes and pointless subsidies would disappear for both corporations and wealthy individuals. Suggesting a consumption tax is risky, I concede, because unless political forces are realigned by crisis, the right wing would turn it into a regressive flat tax—injuring those who have already been injured.

§ A Fannie Mae for environmental progress, for small businesses, for inner-city rehabilitation and for other capital-starved realms of the economy would insure greater access to capital and credit, just as Fannie Mae's financing does for home ownership. Other quasi-governmental institutions might provide partial tax preferences for experimental ventures embracing equitable commitments to workers, like the living wage, or important new priorities, like ecological sustainability and worker ownership.

§ A less grandiose military posture toward the rest of the world would save scarce capital. Why exactly does the United

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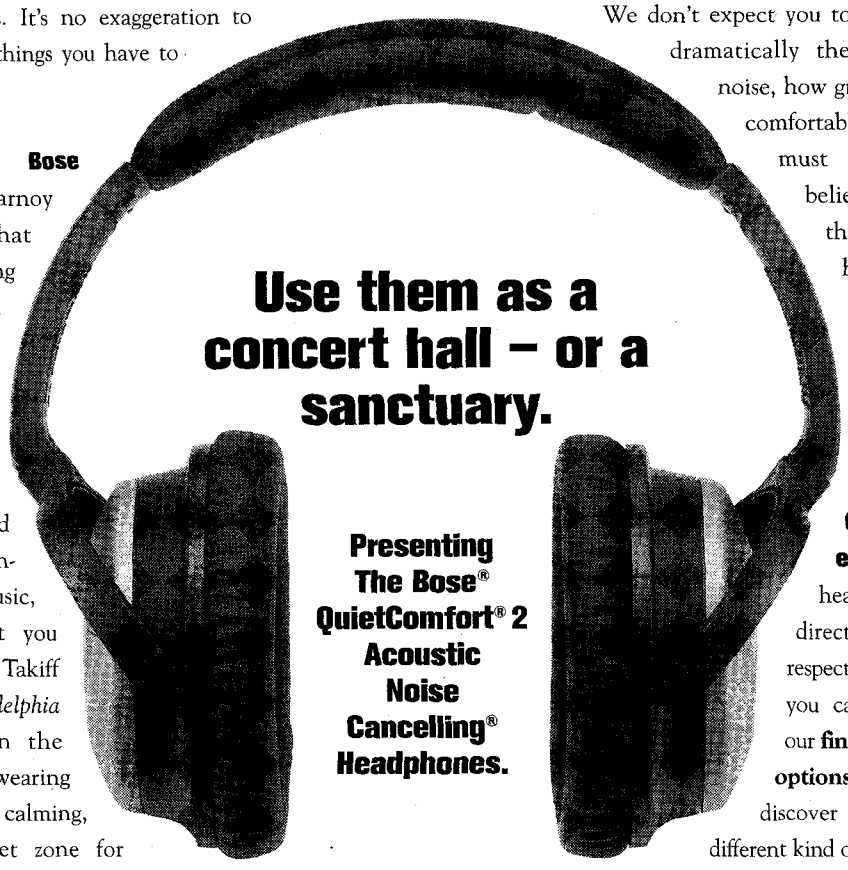

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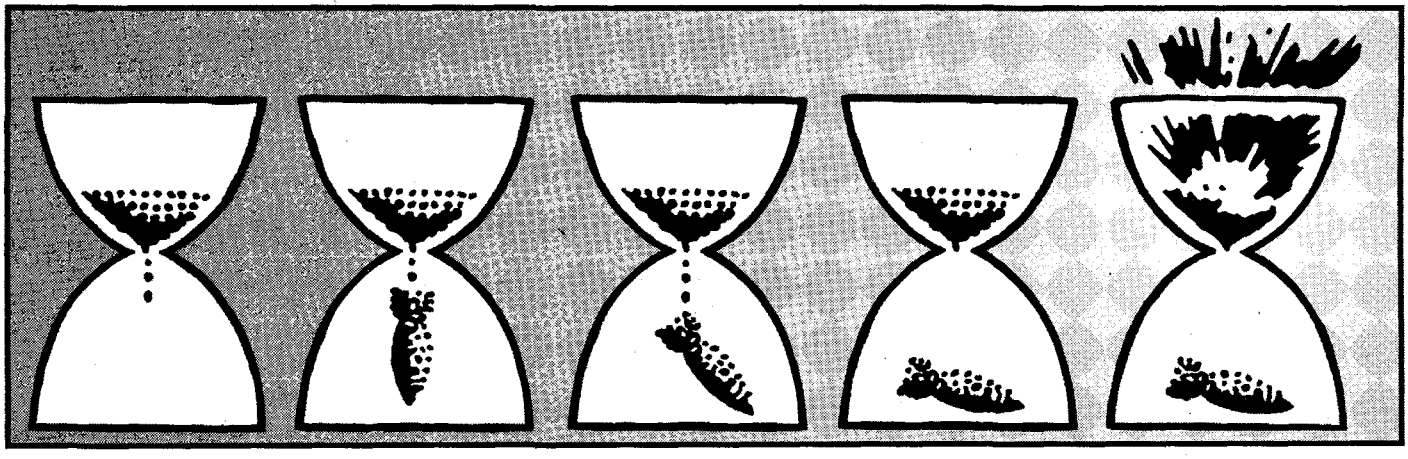
States maintain its vast forward empire of military outposts? The $500 billion military budget, citizens may observe, does not protect America from the $500 billion trade deficit.

§ Trade deficits (or surpluses) could be held to moderate levels for all nations by a band of tolerances that, when violated, would authorize nations to take protective measures. Global leaders would need to focus on institutional reforms like labor rights and ecological accords and on inventing a new international financial institution that could end destructive currency wars and other instabilities.

All these ideas, I know, sound quite improbable at this moment. Certainly, the establishment would brush them aside. But do not dismiss the possibility that dramatic change and epic political reforms lie ahead. When self-important people and powerful institutions are governed by illusion, history has a way of biting back. ■

DANIEL PIPES HAS MADE HIS NAME INVEIGHING AGAINST AN ACADEMY OVERRUN BY POLITICAL EXTREMISTS. BUT HE IS NOTHING IF NOT EXTREME IN HIS OWN VIEWS.



IGOR KOPELNITSKY

Neocon Man

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Daniel Pipes was a busy man in the days following September 11, 2001. The Philadelphia-based foreign policy analyst and commentator on terrorism and Islam first learned that planes had crashed into the World Trade Center when a local television producer called to invite him to the station for an interview. Over the next twelve months, Pipes would appear on 110 television and 450 radio shows. His op-eds graced the pages of the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Los Angeles Times*. The *New York Post* signed him up as a columnist. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* described him as "smoking-hot."

It was not always thus. Pipes, 54, had labored in comparative obscurity during the 1990s, writing a series of books and articles that advanced a hard line on Arab countries from Syria to Saudi Arabia to Iran, and darkly warning that Muslim-Americans posed a threat to the United States. Back then, these were not popular topics on the talk-show circuit. Pipes indeed seemed destined to share the fate of his old friend Steven Emerson, another self-styled terrorism expert, who gained notoriety in the immediate aftermath of the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing for suggesting that it bore a "Middle Eastern trait." Pipes himself echoed this, telling *USA Today* that the bombing showed that the West was "under attack" and that fundamentalists "are targeting us."

The words of a demagogue, or of a prophet ahead of his time? To a growing circle of conservative admirers, Pipes is the latter. The *Forward* recently named him one of the nation's fifty most influential American Jews. Last year President Bush overrode objections from Muslim-American groups in appointing Pipes to the US Institute of Peace, a federal agency whose mandate is to promote the "peaceful resolution of international conflicts," despite the fact that Pipes has long dismissed the very idea of peaceful resolution ("diplomacy rarely ends conflicts," he had written a year earlier).

But Pipes's biggest impact has not come from analyzing foreign affairs. It has come from pointing a finger at a purported fifth column lurking in a place conservatives have long suspected of harboring one: academia. Two years ago Pipes launched Campus Watch, an organization whose stated purpose is to expose the analytical failures and political bias of the field of Middle Eastern studies. The group's first act was to post McCarthy-style "dossiers" on the Internet singling out eight professors critical of American and Israeli policies. When more than a hundred scholars contacted Campus Watch to request that they be added to the list in a gesture of solidarity, Pipes obliged, labeling them "apologists for suicide bombings and militant Islam."

As the latter phrase suggests, when Pipes criticizes scholars,

Eyal Press is a Nation *contributing writer.*

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he doesn't just take issue with their arguments. He impugns their motives, tossing out labels like "self-hating" and "anti-American," and lifting quotes out of context to portray his targets as closet sympathizers with Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein. Pipes writes columns titled "Profs Who Hate America." "Why do American academics so often despise their own country while finding excuses for repressive and dangerous regimes?" he wrote in the lead-up to the Iraq war, which he heartily backed, mocking scholars for failing to see that Saddam Hussein posed an "imminent threat" to America.

In Pipes's view, universities these days are overrun by extremists who are reflexively hostile to the United States and Israel, blind to the dangers of Islamic terrorism and intolerant of students who dare to veer from the party line. Although Pipes is not wrong that some Middle Eastern scholars underestimated the danger of militant Islam during the 1990s, his portrait of the field as a whole is nothing if not extreme itself. Yet, with the help of Martin Kramer, who edits the journal Pipes founded, *Middle East Quarterly*, and Stanley Kurtz, a fellow at the Hoover Institution and contributing editor at *National Review Online*, Pipes has succeeded in popularizing this view.

His grievances have been aired on everything from MSNBC to NPR. The *Washington Post* ran a front-page story on the issue. College newspapers across the country have published bristling exchanges about Middle Eastern studies. The debate has even reverberated in Congress, where pending legislation would create an advisory board of government appointees to oversee the government-funded area studies programs responsible for teaching thousands of students about the Middle East each year. The goal of the legislation is to insure that Middle Eastern studies programs "represent the full range of views," as opposed to the "one-sided criticisms of American foreign policy" Stanley Kurtz complained about in recent testimony before the House of Representatives.

'Dan has a sort of Svengali-like ability to portray a situation calmly but in the direst of terms.' —political scientist Ian Lustick

This might seem like an odd time to be policing the academy in search of scholars too critical of Washington's approach to the Middle East, given the chaos now enveloping Iraq, which numerous academic scholars foresaw. And Pipes's vituperative attacks have not made him a terribly popular figure on many campuses these days. Last fall, I watched him deliver a speech at Yale. Pipes showed up flanked by security guards, who whisked him out the door after the speech and a brief question-and-answer session. Nearly half the students in the audience arrived with a black cloth over their mouths to protest Campus Watch's threat to academic freedom.

Yet as one longtime Middle East hand who knows Pipes told me, those expecting Pipes to tone down his criticisms will likely be disappointed, for he carefully calculates what he says. "He's extreme, yes, but for a reason—to push the debate to the right. And it's been effective, no question."

Indeed, arguably Pipes's greatest achievement has been to capitalize on the fears generated by 9/11 in order to cast doubt on the motives and agenda of an entire profession—while keeping his own ideological agenda largely obscured from view.

In early January, I met Pipes on the tenth floor of a glass-and-steel highrise in downtown Philadelphia, headquarters of the Middle East Forum, the think tank he founded in 1994 to "promote American interests" in the region. Pipes is a tall man with a close-cropped beard and a lanky, basketball player's build. For all the venom in his writings, in person he is disarmingly soft-spoken and subdued. Throughout our interview in his corner office, decorated with a framed copy of the letter from President Bush nominating him to the US Institute of Peace, he spoke quietly, pausing frequently to rephrase his views. On television, Pipes affects the same cool dispassion, rarely raising his voice, even more rarely getting flustered. It's a style some believe he has cultivated to lend his pronouncements an understated—hence reasonable—air. "Dan has a sort of Svengali-like ability to portray a situation calmly but in the direst of terms," says Ian Lustick, a political scientist at the University of Pennsylvania who has debated him in the past.

One subject Pipes did not wish to discuss was his personal life. Yet his background is of more than passing relevance to anyone wishing to understand his worldview. He is the elder son of Richard Pipes, the renowned Sovietologist at Harvard who left an important mark on the politics of the cold war—and perhaps the current era as well. In the early 1980s Richard Pipes ran the Eastern European and Soviet Affairs desk at the National Security Council. Before that, he served as chairman of "Team B," a group of intelligence analysts brought together in 1975 by then-CIA Director George H.W. Bush. In a manner strikingly similar to that of the neoconservatives who recently dismissed more cautious estimates about Iraq, Team B's members scorned what they considered the timidity of the intelligence establishment, which at the time was supporting détente with the Soviet Union. Based on what Richard Pipes himself termed "soft evidence," Team B's members hyped the Soviet threat. One of its young weapons analysts was Paul Wolfowitz. The Defense Secretary at the time was Donald Rumsfeld; the Chief of Staff, Dick Cheney.

Despite his forays into politics, Richard Pipes was above all a scholar. Young Daniel grew up in a book-lined home in Cambridge where, as his father recounts in his recently published memoir, *Vixi*, the visitors included Edmund Wilson and Isaiah Berlin. It could not have been a more scholarly milieu, and Daniel evidently soaked it up. In 1967, he began his freshman year at the prestigious university where his father taught, and where afterward he would pursue a PhD in medieval Islamic history.

It was the height of the Vietnam War, and young people everywhere were rebelling—but not Pipes. In April of 1969, his sophomore year, antiwar activists took over the main administrative building at Harvard. The university called in the police. Pipes recalls students gathering in the football stadium to debate the crisis, which dominated campus life for weeks. Pipes's group was among the smallest: He backed Harvard's administration and like his father firmly supported the Vietnam War.

Pipes lost friends that spring. "People with opposing views simply couldn't talk to each other," he told me. Until that point, he'd always thought of himself as a Democrat. By the time

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George McGovern ran for President against Richard Nixon in 1972, he'd switched over to the GOP.

Yet if Pipes was a budding conservative, he did not strike most people as an ideologue. "Dan at that time was a student," recalls Richard Bulliet, a professor of medieval Islamic history at Columbia University who was teaching at Harvard at the time. "I remember going to the graduation party his parents threw for him. He was a bright guy who wanted to be a medievalist, which is what I am. We got along real well. I don't recall him being political at all."

Pipes's first book, *Slave Soldiers and Islam*, published in 1981 but the product of field research conducted in Egypt during the 1970s, indeed bears no sign of its author's politics. It is a slender, scholarly work, carefully documented and measured in tone.

By the time *Slave Soldiers* appeared, however, its author had shifted his attention to other things. As Pipes would later recall, in the late 1970s he abruptly "gave up my claim to be a medievalist and metamorphosed into a historian of the modern Middle East." Pipes says that events on the world stage, in particular the 1979 Iranian Revolution, prompted the change. Bulliet offers another view: "I think Dan made the decision that he was born to be an actor in the world." With the rise of Ayatollah Khomeini and the Iranian hostage crisis, Islam was becoming a hot topic in Washington. And Washington is where Pipes headed. In 1982, shortly after his father entered the Reagan Administration, Pipes did likewise, leaving academia to join the policy planning staff at the State Department.

Pipes calls antiwar scholars soft on Saddam, but when Saddam was gassing the Kurds, Pipes was pushing for stronger ties to Iraq.

It was his first excursion into the world of politics, though Pipes apparently spent much of his time in Washington engrossed in a scholarly endeavor, working on his second book, *In the Path of God*. Published in 1983, the book foreshadows its author's preoccupation with Muslim fundamentalism, whose growing influence Pipes chronicled in dozens of states. It is an impressively wide-ranging work, albeit one marred by a strikingly crude thesis. Islam's resurgence, Pipes argued, was largely a product of the OPEC boom. Once oil prices dropped, he predicted, Islamic fundamentalism would fade away.

It's no sin to be wrong, of course—unless you are a Middle East specialist on Campus Watch's radar screen. These days, Pipes rarely misses an opportunity to ridicule Middle East specialists for their "mistakes," a charge echoed by Martin Kramer, whose recent book, *Ivory Towers on Sand: The Failure of Middle Eastern Studies in America*, argues that academics have so often gotten things wrong that merely mentioning their name "causes eyes to roll" among policy-makers. Kramer lays much of the blame on Edward Said's *Orientalism*, which he argues led an entire generation of scholars to look for Western causes of the Middle East's problems rather than confront unsettling internal developments.

In this, Kramer is actually following Pipes himself, who in the introduction to *In the Path of God* criticized Said and defended the traditional Orientalist approach as "the only basis for an analysis of [Islam] in relation to political life." He airily dismissed "the recent profusion of writings by social scientists" examining the Middle East, and complained that Muslim writers in particular "have added relatively little to the study of Islam." Here was a foretaste of the Pipes that would soon grow familiar to readers of his essays and books: a man with a wearying tendency to portray Muslims in general and the Arab world in particular in condescending terms. There was, to be sure, a throat-clearing qualifier—"I respect the Islamic way of life, admire much about it"—but as a reviewer in the *Washington Post* noted, Pipes "professes respect for Muslims but is frequently contemptuous of them."

After leaving the State Department in 1983, Pipes continued teaching at various universities. But he failed to land a tenure-track job, and would produce little original scholarship in the years to come, instead churning out dozens of essays on topical subjects—terrorism, Israel, the Rushdie Affair—for publications such as *Commentary* and *The National Interest*. The range was impressive, and Pipes wrote with clarity and panache, yet he often strayed into territory about which he had little expertise. In 1984, for example, he reviewed *From Time Immemorial*, a book on the Zionist settlement of Palestine by Joan Peters, in *Commentary*. Peters's thesis—that Palestine was "uninhabited" until Jews began settling there—was demolished by reviewers such as Albert Hourani, Norman Finkelstein and Yehoshua Porath, all of whom exposed the book as a crude pastiche of plagiarized references and deliberately twisted facts.

Pipes, however, found the work "startling" in its insight, praising Peters's "historical detective work." The lacerating critic who today impugns scholars for their anti-Israel bias detected no bias here. "Many of those who now consider themselves Palestinian refugees were either immigrants themselves before 1948 or the children of immigrants," he said. "This historical fact reduces their claim to the land of Israel."

It was not the first time Pipes's attention would be drawn to Israel, nor would it be the last. In 1981 he complained in *Commentary* about Westerners who obsessively tracked "the minutiae of housing on the West Bank, electricity company ownership in Jerusalem, use of Jordan River water," merely to shed negative light on Jews. Three years later, he took aim at the media for its coverage of the Lebanon War, again because it made Israel look bad. By 1988, his attention had shifted to the prospect of a Palestinian state, which he warned in a *New York Times* editorial would be a "nightmare" for its intended beneficiaries. Statehood "would hurt Arabs far more than Israelis," Pipes insisted, since the Palestinians would suffer under the repression of a terrorist organization, the PLO.

Pipes is not, as some allege, an uncritical supporter of Israel: With admirable consistency, he favors phasing out US aid to Israel on conservative grounds ("I oppose the dole for both individuals and states," he told me). Generally, though, Pipes criticizes the Israeli government for being too soft on the Palestinians, whose treachery appears to be limitless in his eyes. Consider his reaction to a "targeted" assassination by an Israeli warplane in the Gaza Strip two years ago that destroyed three residential buildings and killed fifteen civilians (150 more were injured). "It's a tragedy," Pipes allowed on CNN, but went on to insist that "the Palestinians have the moral opprobrium here," since

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they were not "playing fair" by allowing a target to blend into a civilian area.

Pipes has repeatedly called for Israel to crush the Palestinians—for their own good, he emphasizes—while simultaneously accusing scholars like the widely respected Rashid Khalidi of being apologists for violence. "After 9/11," Pipes wrote as co-author of a *New York Post* column, "[Khalidi] admonished the media to drop its 'hysteria about suicide bombers.'" What Khalidi actually said was, "Israel has killed three times as many innocent civilians as have Palestinians, for all the media hysteria about suicide bombers." Note how, by parsing the quote, Pipes made Khalidi seem not only like an apologist for suicide bombers, whom he has repeatedly condemned, but a man callously indifferent to the victims of 9/11.

"One of the things Pipes means when he accuses scholars of supporting terrorism is that we object to his characterization of all Palestinians as terrorists," says Juan Cole, a professor at the University of Michigan who landed on Campus Watch's hit list. "Pipes goes on television and says the Palestinians have completely rejected Israel's right to exist, even though polling data show that a majority on both sides would trade land for peace. Pipes knows this—he's very well informed—but he ignores it because it's propaganda, and he's a good propagandist."

There are, to be sure, rigidly anti-Zionist scholars out there, just as there are fervently pro-Israeli ones. But few specialists who study the Arab-Israeli conflict see the matter as one-sidedly as Pipes does. During our interview, I asked whether Israel bore any responsibility for the current situation in the occupied territories. "Sure, it exists," he said. What of the settlements, which have expanded so massively in recent years? "Not terribly significant." Had he been to the occupied territories recently? Pipes paused.

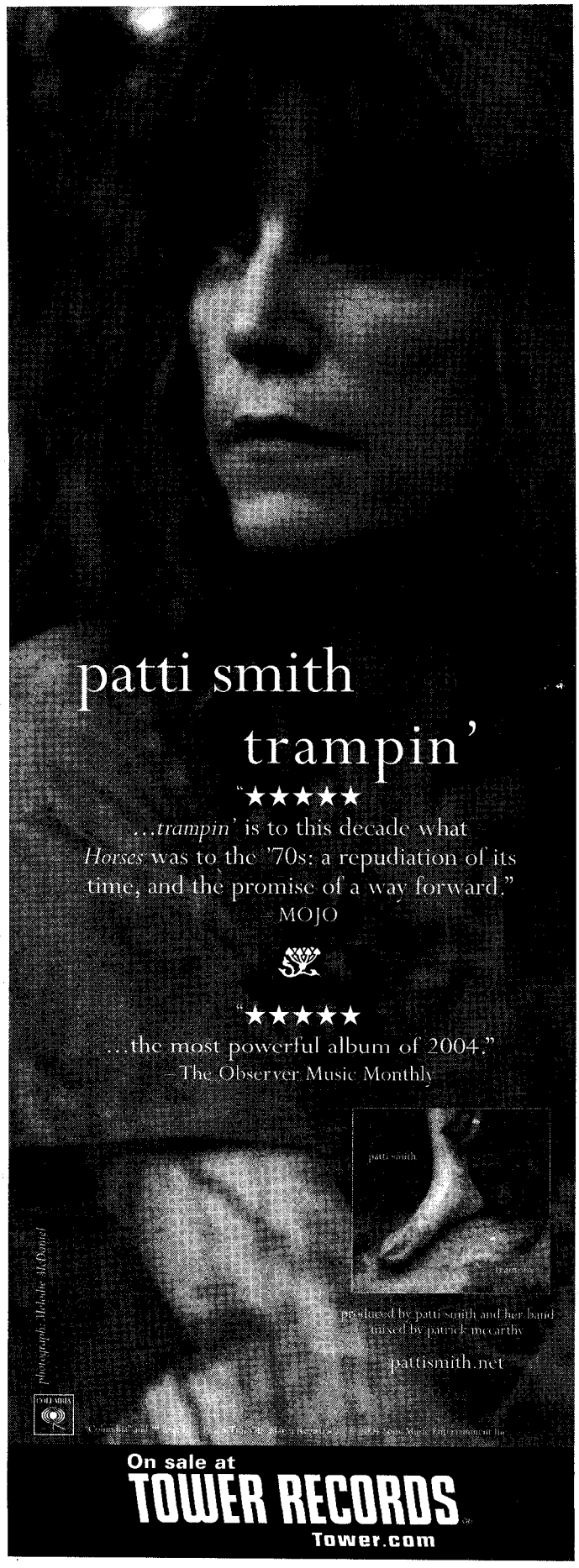
"Not of late, no."

Ever?

"Not a friendly place, no."

By the mid-1980s, Pipes had settled in Philadelphia and assumed the directorship of the Foreign Policy Research Institute, a conservative think tank out of which the Middle East Forum would eventually emerge. While there, he served as editor of the think tank's journal, *Orbis*, which in 1988 published "The Baghdad Alternative." The article, by Laurie Mylroie, advocated bolstering US ties to Saddam Hussein. There is little doubt Pipes agreed with her thesis; a year earlier, he co-wrote an article with Mylroie in *The New Republic*, "Back Iraq," that also argued for a US alliance with Saddam—the man whom George H.W. Bush would soon be likening to Hitler—as a counter to Iran.

You might think this memory would discourage Pipes from accusing others of failing to recognize Saddam's atrocities. You would be wrong. Amazingly, Pipes and his followers do just that. Academics who opposed the recent war in Iraq "don't look at the repression of Saddam Hussein's Iraq," Pipes stated in a speech last November. Actually, while Pipes was airing arguments in his journal for stronger military ties to Iraq—at a time when Saddam was gassing his own people—scholars were producing books like *Iraq Since 1958: From Revolution to Dictatorship*, a 1988 study whose authors expressed "revulsion and horror" at the "barbaric activities" of the dictatorship.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Iraq was not, in fact, one of Pipes's primary concerns during the 1990s. His preoccupations lay closer to home. This was a period when conservatives were searching about for a cause as galvanizing as the cold war had been—and when more and more Muslim immigrants began settling in the West. Might this represent the next great threat? In 1990 Pipes wrote a cover story for *National Review*, "The Muslims Are Coming! The Muslims Are Coming!" in which he argued against the alarmist view. Even so, he did foresee certain problems. "Fears of a Muslim influx have more substance than the worry about *jihad*," Pipes wrote. "West European societies are unprepared for the massive immigration of brown-skinned peoples cooking strange foods and not exactly maintaining Germanic standards of hygiene."

As the 1990s wore on, Pipes seemed increasingly obsessed with the growing threat that Muslim immigrants posed, a peril he portrayed in lurid terms. "Muslims who hate America, and especially Jews therein, are growing in numbers and reach, enjoying the protections afforded by the rule of law and the indulgence of a benevolent, pluralist society," he wrote in a 1999 article in the *Forward*. "The real and present danger [to Jews] is by no means the pro-Israel Christian Coalition but the rabidly anti-Semitic Muslim Arab Youth Association."

The attacks of September 11 proved one thing: Militant Islam was indeed a threat. But did it confirm Pipes's broader views on terrorism and Islam? Pipes's backers certainly thought so. According to Jerry Sorkin, who for years served on the board of the Middle East Forum, donations poured in to the organization almost immediately after the Twin Towers were struck, not least because its founder could suddenly be spotted everywhere: *Crossfire*, *Nightline*, *Hardball*. During this same period, Sorkin says, the diversity that had once characterized the Middle East Forum's board vanished. "I sat at one board meeting and thought to myself, am I at a ZOA [Zionist Organization of America] meeting?" says Sorkin, whose views on the Arab-Israeli conflict are moderate. Sorkin told me he respects Pipes and always felt welcome at the Middle East Forum. Eventually, however, he decided to move on, and says he was not alone.

In the changed atmosphere, Pipes was able to find a home for a book on Muslim-Americans that he claims had been "unpublishable" beforehand. *Militant Islam Reaches America*, published in 2002, warns that the Muslim-American population harbors "a substantial body" of people who "sympathize with the goals of the suicide hijackers," people who "despise the United States and ultimately wish to transform it into a Muslim country." More recently, Jim Lobe of the Inter-Press Service obtained the draft of a grant proposal in which Pipes proposed launching an "Islamic Progress Institute," which "can articulate a moderate, modern and pro-American viewpoint" on behalf of Muslims. In other words, the man who has complained that Muslims are abusing America's tolerance and failing to watch their hygienic standards now proposes to be their spokesman.

Muslim fundamentalists are "Nazis," "potential killers" who represent "true dangers" to Jews, Christians, women and gays, he argues. But on the subject of Jewish and Christian fundamentalists, he is far milder. When I asked him whether people like Jerry Falwell, who called 9/11 "God's judgment" on gays, civil libertarians and feminists, were really so different in their attitude

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toward modernity, he seemed aghast at the very comparison. "I see no signs of that," he said, insisting that Falwell "lives within the framework of a democratic polity and does not believe he has a truth that he and his colleagues hold which he can impose on the rest of us."

Shortly before Pipes launched Campus Watch, Martin Kramer's *Ivory Towers on Sand* appeared. The academic establishment, argued Kramer in his more scholarly version of the argument Pipes would soon popularize, had been asleep throughout the 1980s and '90s, producing not a single "serious" study on Osama bin Laden while lavishing attention on so-called Muslim moderates.

There is some truth to this. Books like John Esposito's *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, published in 1992, advanced the then-fashionable view that the danger of Islamic terrorism was overblown. "I think a lot of us were slow to appreciate the real depth of radicalism on the Islamic fringe," acknowledges William Quandt, a professor at the University of Virginia and former fellow at the Brookings Institution. Quandt, however, notes that many academics also produced informative, first-rate studies of Islamic politics that Pipes and Kramer ignore. "Is all the contemporary scholarship first-rate? Of course not, but an awful lot of it is pretty darn good."

Dan Brumberg, a Middle East specialist at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, agrees. "I think Dan is right that there was a tendency to read mainstream Islamism as benign and underplay its racist, xenophobic and anti-Semitic currents. But this is a very small part of Middle Eastern studies. Over the past ten years there's been a huge literature on autocracy in the region, and none of it glosses over the problems."

It's also worth asking whether the chief danger in America rests in the excessive influence wielded by dissenting Middle Eastern specialists, several of whom received hate mail and death threats after being attacked by Pipes. (Others, including Ian Lustick at Penn, told me they've learned that students were taking their class in order to serve as spies for Campus Watch.) After all, the specialists who accepted and propagated the dubious claim that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction mostly resided at think tanks, not universities. Indeed, many of the "America-hating" professors singled out by Campus Watch warned that attacking a country with no proven ties to Al Qaeda might undermine US security by fueling enmity throughout the Muslim world.

Pipes himself voiced no such concerns, arguing instead that the United States "cannot pass up a unique chance to remake the world's most politically fevered regime." In this he echoed Fouad Ajami, whose work Pipes cites approvingly and who is on the list of "Recommended Professors" on Campus Watch's website. That Ajami's predictions about the Iraq war—that US soldiers would be warmly welcomed, that America didn't need help from allies, that democracy would blossom afterward—have been proved wrong has not dislodged his name from the list.

Shortly after Baghdad fell, Pipes himself did voice second thoughts, characterized by the same patronizing attitude that has marked much of his work on Arab societies. Iraq needed a "democratically-minded Iraqi strongman," he'd decided by April of 2003, since its people "mentally live in a world of conspiracy theories" and were not quite ready for Western-style self-rule. Pipes conceded to me that there was an element of "wishful thinking" among supporters of the war, "including in myself." He might have been more sober-minded had he listened to some of the arguments being made by members of the profession he once, a long time ago, aspired to join. ■

LETTERS
CONTINUED

(Continued From Page 2)
the incentive for the race to the bottom.

Why is this never considered?

RAYMOND E. MEYER

Eugene, Ore.

■ Not one of your articles mentions organized labor. Surely any progressive outline of this issue must address the status of unions here and abroad. Obviously corporations are searching the globe for cheaper, more exploitable labor. Globalized union organizing should be one means of combating this trend. Only through global solidarity will workers be able to resist the race to the bottom characterized by outsourcing.

Second, the authors' various exhortations to the US government, the World Bank and the IMF to change their approach fail to recognize a fundamental problem with these institutions and the people running them: *They don't care.* They have no interest in a fairly compensated work force. Their policies work to insure just the opposite, as it is in their best interest to have a weak, undereducated global working class. By skirting this fact, progressive economists give these institutions validity as part of the solution when in fact they are a major source of the problem. CLAIRE SYRETT

Escondido, Calif.

■ Outsourcing will have profoundly adverse implications for the future of our democracy.

As more and more jobs are exported overseas, the middle class, already reeling from several years of economic calamities, is rapidly becoming an endangered species. However, without a strong middle class, American democracy cannot survive. In short, as we export our jobs overseas, we also export the foundations of our democracy.

For extremist governments to flourish, the middle class must first be eliminated. This is as true for the former Soviet Union and other communist countries as it is for right-wing dictatorships.

There is no greater threat to America's role as the world's strongest democracy than corporate America's attempts to create the ultimate paradox: a jobless middle class. If outsourcing continues unabated, we will bequeath to our descendants a greatly weakened middle class that cannot possibly sustain a viable democracy.

That is the real bottom line of corporate outsourcing. DENNIS M. CLAUSEN

MOTHER KNOWS BEST

Wheeling, WV

■ I received my first issue of *The Nation* about three weeks ago, and two more since, and I haven't read one yet. Why? My mother can't put them down! She loves the magazine and reads it cover to cover. Thank you for giving us both a chance to be enlightened for the price of one subscription. Keep up the good work! MEL HOPKINS

NOVEMBER SONG

Davis, Calif.

■ I do not love thee, Mr. Bush,
For all the whoppers that you push.
I hope that Kerry spanks your tush,
I do not love thee, Mr. Bush.

RICHARD HAGGSTROM

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(Continued From Page 6)
for a 1997 CIA Inspector General investigation that concluded, "The Honduran military committed hundreds of human rights abuses since 1980, many of which were politically motivated and officially sanctioned" and linked to "death squad activities"?

Not only has Negroponte declined to acknowledge the obvious; when he was ambassador, the State Department rigged its Honduras human rights reports to Congress. As a 1995 *Baltimore Sun* series noted, "A comparison of the annual human rights reports prepared while Negroponte was ambassador with the facts as they were then known shows that Congress was deliberately misled." The *Sun* reported, "Time and again...Negroponte was confronted with evidence that a Honduran army intelligence unit, trained by the CIA, was stalking, kidnapping, torturing and killing suspected subversives." Butt this didn't make it into State Department reports. Had Honduras been found to be engaging in systematic abuses, it could have lost its US aid—thwarting the Reagan Administration's use of Honduras to support the *contras*.

Negroponte has claimed "there was no effort to soft pedal" abuses in Honduras. Yet in public statements he repeatedly conveyed a misleading appearance, and in the years since he has held tight—in the face of compelling evidence—to the view that the abuses that did occur were merely unfortunate exceptions. Negroponte's confirmation hearing will provide senators a chance to probe Bush's plans (or lack thereof) in Iraq. But if Negroponte's record as an abuse denier is not questioned, as seems likely, he will once again be able to escape his haunted past. DAVID CORN

'Bad Guys'

On April 20, Solicitor General Ted Olson told the Supreme Court that the federal courts could not question the indefinite detention of "enemy combatants" held at Guantánamo Bay because as foreigners outside our borders, the detainees have no constitutional rights and no access to courts. A majority of the Justices seemed concerned that if federal courts have no jurisdiction, Guantánamo would be seen as a "lawless enclave," as John Gibbons, arguing for the detainees, put it. The Solicitor General, who opened his argument reminding the Court that "the United States is at war," seemed surprised at the prospect that the Court might actually rule against the government in the "war on terrorism."

When the government stands up on April 28 to defend its detentions of two US citizens—Yaser Hamdi, allegedly captured in Afghanistan, and José Padilla, arrested at O'Hare Airport—as enemy combatants, it won't argue that they have no constitutional rights. Citizens are indisputably protected by the Constitution. But if the government's view prevails, US citizens might as well have no rights, because the President will effectively have unilateral authority to hold them indefinitely without trial on his own say-so.

The Bush Administration initially contended that the courts are barred from hearing the claims even of US citizens held as "enemy combatants." After the most conservative federal court in the country, the US Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, rejected that view, the Administration rethought its position; it now concedes that the courts may exercise review over the detention of citizen "enemy combatants" (but not foreigners). But the scope of review it argues for is so restricted as to be illusory.

According to the Administration, the courts may at most ask whether, solely on the basis of the government's submissions, the President had "some evidence" to label a person an enemy combatant. In Hamdi's and Padilla's cases, the government has relied entirely on a two-page affidavit from a mid-level Pentagon functionary, Michael Mobbs. Mobbs had no firsthand information and merely relayed the untested assertions of unidentified sources. In the government's view, the courts may not assess the reliability of Mobbs's assertions; Hamdi and Padilla have no right to participate in the review or even consult with their lawyers; and their lawyers may not offer any evidence to contradict Mobbs's contentions.

While the government's position is so obviously unsatisfactory that even former Administration stalwarts like Viet Dinh have backed away from it, these are not easy cases. Both lower appellate courts, for example, may have gone too far. The Fourth Circuit ruled that because it was undisputed that Hamdi was captured on the battlefield, the courts had no role to play. But nothing in the case can be "undisputed," as neither the court nor Hamdi's lawyers were ever permitted to ask Hamdi himself. The Second Circuit's decision probably went too far in the other direction. It reasoned that the President lacks authority to hold citizens as enemy combatants without express authorization from Congress. Checks and balances are undoubtedly critical, but that view suggests that if a citizen who was an Al Qaeda member were apprehended entering the country with a nuclear bomb, the President could not detain him as a combatant. It has long been accepted, however, that the President, as Commander in Chief, has the authority and indeed obligation to protect the country. Surely in responding to an armed attack he can do so by detaining those fighting for an enemy, citizen or not. That's what President Roosevelt did when a US citizen entered the country in a German plot to blow up defense facilities. In any event, Congress expressly authorized the use of military force against Al Qaeda, and if it is permissible therefore to kill Al Qaeda combatants, it must also be permissible to detain them.

But here's the rub: Who's to say that Hamdi and Padilla are enemy combatants at all? Thus far, we have only the President's word and Mobbs's untested affidavits. We shouldn't take Padilla's word that he is innocent, but neither should we take the President's word that he is guilty. A workable solution must acknowledge that the authorization to use military force against Al Qaeda and the Taliban implies the authority to detain their combatants for the duration of the conflict. But unless the President is to be afforded wholly unfettered power, the courts must assure that all detainees—citizens and foreign nationals alike—are given a fair hearing to determine their status. That is what the Geneva Conventions and our own military regulations require; that's what due process must demand. And that is what the Administration has consistently refused to provide. The power to lock up human beings indefinitely cannot be left to George W. Bush's unilateral determination that they are "bad guys." DAVID COLE

David Cole, legal affairs correspondent, is the author of Enemy Aliens: Double Standards and Constitutional Freedoms in the War on Terrorism.

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

The National Insecurity State

STEPHEN HOLMES

RISE OF THE VULCANS: The History of Bush's War Cabinet.
By James Mann.
Viking. 426 pp. $25.95.

Keen to control the flow of information, the Bush political machine has labored day and night to obstruct public oversight of US foreign policy. But the basic reality cannot be hidden. A tiny group of individuals, with eccentric ideas and reflexes, has recklessly compounded the country's security nightmare, launching a costly and destabilizing military adventure on publicly unexamined assumptions. To pierce their veil of secrecy, James Mann has adopted a simple methodology in his new book, *Rise of the Vulcans*. He has pored over the past words and deeds of Bush's foreign policy team. By interrogating the public record for clues about Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, Condoleezza Rice, Colin Powell and Richard Armitage, he has cast fresh light on the origins of the debacle unfolding before our eyes.

We knew it already, of course, but it is nevertheless unnerving to read that fateful decisions, perhaps affecting the course of world history, are profoundly influenced by palace intrigue and deadline-driven haste in selecting party loyalists to occupy public offices. If conservative Congressmen had not blocked Tom Ridge's nomination as Defense Secretary, for the ludicrously immaterial reason that he was wobbly on abortion, then the Rumsfeld-Wolfowitz-Feith team would have been in no position to hijack the country's reaction to 9/11. By sheer chance, Rice and Powell, while no doubt orderly managers, have pedestrian minds and perhaps deferential personalities. Neither provides a gripping and persuasive vision of the US role in the world that might have counteracted the megalomania of the neoconservatives. And neither is capable of outfoxing the hard-liners in an interagency power struggle. By sheer luck of the draw, therefore, and also because Rumsfeld's former assistant, Cheney, sits in the White House and commands his own foreign policy staff, civilian leaders at the Pentagon have managed to amass unprecedented influence over foreign policy, unbalanced by those in the State Department and elsewhere in the federal government who still believe that diplomacy is indispensable, even for a military superpower.

It is only a slight exaggeration to say that the fate of the country and the world depends on the eccentricities of a few political operatives who, by shrewd maneuvering, have prevailed in a bureaucratic power grab. These excessively self-assured individuals sat out the Clinton years, often affiliated with dogmatically partisan think tanks where researchers are paid to assemble evidence and arguments for preconceived policies. "Data mining" is not the Vice President's personal idiosyncrasy, in other words, but business as usual for the American Enterprise Institute and the other simplification factories from which Bush recruited many high-level appointees. This is where Administration officials acquired their habit of politicizing intelligence, that is, trawling for evidence that substantiates what they want to believe. After 9/11, their bunker mentality—their doctrinaire exclusion of dissonant viewpoints and unwelcome information—became so extreme that well-connected moderate Republicans such as Brent Scowcroft and James Baker were reduced to communicating with the White House through op-eds.

Despite their reputation as radicals, Bush's Iraq advisers are prisoners of the past, hostages to habits formed in the cold war.

Allowing a clique of like-minded individuals to run foreign policy behind closed doors risks autism and loss of contact with reality. Right-wing ideologues who identify with the Administration fret incessantly about "moral relativism." But they pay little attention to the opposite and more treacherous failing: false certainty. The obstinate refusal of Administration officials to confess

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their mistakes, that is, their implicit claim to infallibility, has by now become a national embarrassment. It is also a slap at the Constitution, which established various mechanisms of self-correction (such as judicial and legislative oversight of executive action) on the premise that even the wisest men are sometimes wrong and need, precisely when they find it discomfiting, the benefit of an adversarial process.

The Administration's leading hawks, as Mann shows, have long been devoted to America's military predominance. "The defeat in Vietnam," he says, led them "to a preoccupation with first regaining and then maintaining American military power." They are also well-known for their scorn of arms control and impatience with what they considered to be Henry Kissinger's coddling of left-wing tyrants. Whatever the threat, they consistently preferred, and still do, confrontation to engagement. Speaking of Rumsfeld's tour of duty in the Ford Administration, Mann remarks: "As secretary of defence he did more than anyone else to block détente and to stiffen American policy toward the Soviet Union." Stiff-arming opponents has consistently defined their shared approach.

The principal architects of the current calamity, in Mann's account, are Cheney and Rumsfeld, with Wolfowitz playing a strong supporting role. Having treated Powell as arm candy during the 2000 campaign, dangling him before the public to reassure moderate voters, they quickly sidelined him once Bush took office. They have a reputation as radicals, ready to shake things up, with no reverence for the status quo. But the reality is not so straightforward. For they are also prisoners of the past, hostages to outdated preoccupations and to habits formed decades earlier, when they first wielded power. Mann calls them "backward-leaning." What he means is that these old men cannot stop fighting the cold war. Their struggle with the Soviets, moreover, led them to imitate the enemy to some extent, making them shockingly at ease with lying publicly for a higher cause, eternally ready "to galvanize the nation into rapid action before it was too late."

A few days after 9/11, Wolfowitz declared defiantly that "*dictators* underestimate America's strength" (my emphasis). This phrase bespeaks a dismaying numbness to lived experience. Mann refers to Wolfowitz as "the leading conservative foreign policy thinker of his generation." But with the country reeling, his immediate reflex was to strike a Churchillian pose, revealing his psychological, or perhaps ideological, fixations. As Richard Clarke reveals in his scathing memoir, *Against All Enemies*, Wolfowitz showed himself wholly unable to bring the new threat into focus. Faced with terrorists, he could see only "dictators." And this is but a minor example of a more general degradation of public discourse. The Administration's corruption of thought and language appears not only in its deliberate blurring of Al Qaeda and Iraq but also in its often-repeated claim that we are now engaged in "a conflict between terrorism and democracy." This is a highly confusing manner of speaking, because Al Qaeda terrorists have attacked not only the United States but also, for example, Saudi Arabia. Since Saudi Arabia is not a democratic country, it is impossible to make sense of the current worldwide struggle by depicting it as a war between terrorism and democracy. Those who describe it this way confound not only the public but also themselves.

When the Soviet Union collapsed, the principal concern of Cheney and Wolfowitz, this time with the full support of Powell and Armitage, was to avoid a serious cutback in military spending. (According to Mann, Powell signed off on the disastrous Somalia mission, from which he subsequently tried to distance himself, because he did not want to give the newly elected Democratic President and Congress an excuse for cutting the military budget after the end of the cold war.) This rallying around the military budget could be explained by the biographies of all four men, who spent important stretches of their public lives at the Pentagon. But their support for military spending has roots deeper than agency loyalty. It is the fruit of a mindset and a worldview. By background and training, these security hawks could see only certain kinds of threats, namely threats that could be countered effectively only by military force. They could see rogue states in bright colors, but nonstate conspirators remained shadowy and beneath their radar. There is no other way to explain their inattention to terrorism in general and to Osama bin Laden in particular, not only before but even after 9/11.

How much relative weight should we assign to each of the various motivations behind the decision to invade Iraq: the desire to display America's intimidating military power by crushing a weak enemy; the desire to destroy a threat to Israel; the desire to prevent Saudi oil from falling into the hands of radical jihadists in the event of a coup against the royal family; the desire to prevent Saddam from reinitiating his suspended weapons programs once the sanctions regime unraveled; the desire to complete the unfinished busi-

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the Gulf War; and so forth?

Mann does not answer this question. But he does help us explore an important aspect of the same puzzle, namely: Did the desire to democratize Iraq have any influence at all on the decision to go to war? There are many reasons for doubting it, above all the fact that Bush spokespersons began to highlight the benefit to Iraqis of Saddam's removal from power only after their original justifications for the war, stressing benefits to Americans, collapsed under scrutiny. It is also noteworthy that Bush campaigned in 2000 against the very idea of humanitarian intervention, associating the toppling of odious dictators with the arrogant and futile desire to impose the American system of government on faraway peoples, who are perhaps unprepared for democracy but whom, in any case, we understand only poorly. During his debates with Gore, Bush stated, apparently without coaching: "I just don't think it's the role of the United States to walk into a country [and] say, 'We do it this way; so should you.'" That 9/11, which so obviously awoke Bush's longing to strike back in anger, also converted Bush to a Mother Teresa foreign policy is hard to believe. The self-styled Warrior President cannot possibly subscribe to the Clintonian idea that foreigners will love us if we are nice to them, even though that seems to be the only way to make sense of his Administration's claim that Arabs in particular will come to admire America (and accept Israel) if only we lend them a hand as they make themselves democratic and prosperous.

Can the democratization of the Middle East possibly have been among the decisive reasons for launching the Iraq war? Or should we simply view talk of building democracy in Iraq as agitprop concocted to stave off criticism of a ruinous policy? We should approach this topic methodically, if only because the pretense is being desperately maintained. Much of the public and the press has yet to abandon the thought or hope that, while filling the improvised cemeteries of Falluja and Kufa with Iraqis, US forces are nevertheless helping to create a friendly democracy in Iraq.

No one imagines that Rumsfeld or Cheney loses any sleep over the misery of ordinary people in distant countries. That neither had any trouble doing business with cruel tyrants is also well-known. The principal cheerleader for democracy promotion in the Middle East has been Wolfowitz, a man whom Mann calls "the most influential underling in Washington." His influence is presumably augmented by the coincidence that both Cheney's deputy, "Scooter" Libby, and Rice's deputy, Stephen Hadley, are Wolfowitz protégés.

What Mann shows, however, is that Wolfowitz himself was obsessed with Gulf oil and WMDs in the Middle East long before he revealed any humanitarian concern for the victims of tyranny in the region, much less any ambitions to implant American-style democracy in Mesopotamia. His dissertation, completed in 1970 at the University of Chicago under the supervision of Albert Wohlstetter, argued that the Israelis should not be allowed to develop nuclear weapons because, if they did so, their Arab neighbors would be compelled to pursue WMDs for themselves. Commenting on the flagrant paradox here, Mann delivers a syntactically convoluted but politically pungent aside: "In public, at least, Wolfowitz in later years rarely, if ever, acknowledged his opposition to the Israeli nuclear program or the role that it had played in spurring on other countries in the Middle East to match it."

In Iraq, the facile optimism of Wolfowitz's vision for the Middle East is being put to the test. The results so far are not pretty.

Working in the Pentagon under Jimmy Carter as a holdover from the Nixon/Ford Administration, Wolfowitz soon turned his attention to the danger of the Soviet Union's moving militarily to block US access to Persian Gulf oil. If the Soviets successfully did so, he and others argued, they could destroy America's alliances with Japan and Europe, both utterly dependent on imported energy. His interest in the gulf, at this point, was exclusively geopolitical and not at all humanitarian. When the USSR began to buckle and eventually collapsed, it is true, Wolfowitz gave increasing attention to the hostile dictatorship in Iraq. But here again, what alarmed him was less Saddam's tyranny over Iraqis than his hostility to the United States and Israel.

Why Wolfowitz today has become such an ardent advocate of democratizing a country very likely to have an anti-Zionist majority therefore remains something of a mystery. The mystery is deepened if we re-examine, as Mann invites us to do, one of the founding documents of neoconservatism, namely Jeane Kirkpatrick's 1979 *Commentary* essay "Dictatorships and Double Standards." (After reading this article, Reagan began wooing Kirkpatrick and thereby started the migration of neoconservatives from Democratic to Republican ranks.) Kirkpatrick chastised President Carter for his shortsighted criticism of the Shah of Iran for human rights abuses. All Carter managed to do, she argued, was to help replace a friendly dictator with a hostile one. She attributed this self-defeating policy to a naïve strand in American culture: "No idea holds greater sway in the mind of educated Americans than the belief that it is possible to democratize government, anytime, anywhere, under any circumstances." This is an outlandish belief, she continued, because "decades, if not centuries, are normally required for people to acquire the necessary discipline and habits [of democracy]."

Mann draws attention to these passages for a purpose. He is urging us to look deeper into the Administration's current rationale for occupying Iraq. Kirkpatrick composed her essay in the spirit of Edmund Burke and other paleoconservatives, who ridiculed the faith of French revolutionaries that they could impose their progressive ideas on other peoples by force of arms. We can overhear the same doubts about social engineering and the same decent respect for the cake of custom in Brent Scowcroft's recent remark, also cited by Mann: "I'm a skeptic about the ability to transform Iraq into a democracy in any realistic period of time."

So what happened to such sober considerations? Have they been wholly rinsed from the neoconservative worldview? Institutions can be imported perhaps; but they cannot be exported. At least that is what many conservative-minded thinkers believe. So how could Wolfowitz, given his long association with right-wing ideologues, have imagined that the United States could unilaterally change Iraqi political culture by a six-week military campaign? How could a conservative of any stripe have lapsed into such facile optimism?

One common answer is that he is not really a conservative but rather a revolutionary. This pleasantry is seemingly confirmed by the fact that other bearers of the neoconservative label, such as Irving Kristol, were Trotskyists in their youth and, it is argued, are simply continuing their aim of exporting revolution under a new flag. But can we really believe that Wolfowitz, whom Mann also calls "the least daring member of the neoconservative movement," is a revolutionary utopian, unwilling to accept the imperfections of human life and expecting to solve the world's problems once and for all by democratizing the Middle East?

Mann provides an important clue for resolving this mystery: Wolfowitz has never renounced Kirkpatrick's argument. On the contrary, he has gone out of his way to

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reaffirm it. The inconsistency here is only apparent, in truth, since it has long been a maxim among hard-liners to support friendly dictators and oppose unfriendly ones. Carter's mistake, from this perspective, was to oppose a friendly dictator, the Shah of Iran. If he had opposed an unfriendly dictator, such as Saddam, he would not have been chastised, but praised.

This point deserves elaboration. Skeptics about détente learned from the Helsinki process how effectively the United States could weaken the international stature of its principal military rival by invoking human rights. The political utility of demonstrative morality was not lost on the bellicose. Already in 1975, as Mann reminds us, Cheney fought unsuccessfully, against Kissinger, to have Solzhenitsyn invited to the White House. This instrumentalization of human rights is perfectly compatible with Kirkpatrick's attack on Carter. For hard-liners, human rights serve as a stick with which to beat and weaken America's enemies. But the weapon should be sheathed when it comes to America's friends. Human rights are a formidable tool in America's propaganda arsenal; but they are not a blueprint for creating new regimes.

There is at least some evidence that this is the way the Bush Administration treats human rights and democracy in the Middle East today—less as guidelines for nation-building than as moral rebukes meant to humiliate and weaken our enemies. This instrumental approach to human rights and democratic ideals is perfectly compatible with a continued acceptance of the Kirkpatrick doctrine. That the Administration continues to accept it is demonstrated by its forgiving attitude toward Pervez Musharraf, a friendly dictator whom they are reluctant to criticize in the name of liberal ideals.

Such selective invoking of humanitarian ideals, however cynical, is not necessarily incoherent. But it leaves current policy unexplained. What are we doing in Iraq, a year after Saddam's fall, if we are not trying to transform the country into a model democracy that could serve as an inspiration for the entire Middle East? This is the way Ambassador Paul Bremer, echoing Wolfowitz, still talks. So why should we not believe them? After all, America's past indifference to the political oppression of ordinary Arabs has probably done more to stimulate anti-American rage in the region than US support for Israel. So is it not time for a radical change of approach? And is not Iraq the best place to display our newly benign intentions?

This line of argument is morally inspiring, in a way. Unfortunately, it shipwrecks on a minor detail. No one in the US government has any idea how to create democracy in Iraq. Moreover, our behavior strongly suggests that the real decision-makers, namely Cheney and Rumsfeld, were never fully committed to this farfetched undertaking. Strong evidence that the architects of the Iraq war were nonchalant about the goal of postwar democratization is provided by the paucity of troops they arranged to have in Baghdad after victory. There were very few soldiers, and none trained as a constabulary force, and as a result postwar looting and worse could not be brought under control. The predictable consequence of such a power vacuum was the rise of private militias, based on clan, ethnicity and sect, engaged in predatory behavior and offering protection services in the absence of an effective controlling authority. Rumsfeld famously commented on this explosion of physical insecurity, from which the occupation has still not recovered, by quipping cavalierly that "stuff happens."

Human rights are a formidable tool in America's propaganda arsenal, but they are not a blueprint for creating new regimes.

This tasteless jest may signal that the civilian leadership in the Pentagon entertained no more interest in the fate of Iraq after Saddam's fall than in the fate of Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban. Or it may reveal that specialists in military affairs do not know the first thing about democracy, its preconditions, its history or its inherent fragilities and disorders. Perhaps ignorance and bad theory explain how otherwise benevolent men could have confused the toppling of a dictator with the establishment of democracy, as if replacing Saddam with Chalabi was going to be as easy as replacing Clinton with Bush. Or then again, Cheney and Rumsfeld may simply have thought that the Iraqi democracy fantasized by Wolfowitz would be fine, in principle, but that a failed state in Iraq, if it came to that, would present no serious security threat to the United States or its main regional ally. So the political costs of unsuccessful democratization would be relatively low, while the propaganda benefits of flying the democratic flag might be substantial. All told, that may be the most plausible reconstruction of their prewar view.

A final observation completes the case against those who continue to assure us that the United States invaded Iraq with democratization seriously in mind. As mentioned, the White House's zealous devotion to secrecy reveals its weak grasp of the danger that false certainty poses to intelligent decision-making and the timely readjustment of political initiatives gone awry. This misapprehension, combined with a coarse identification of the national interest with a highly partisan agenda, bespeaks a profoundly antidemocratic turn of mind. While in Congress in 1988, as Mann tells us, Cheney helped defeat a law to notify Congress forty-eight hours after the beginning of any covert operation. The same Iran/*contra*–style impatience with Congressional and judicial and public oversight pervades the executive branch today.

But how can an Administration that expects blind trust at home be serious about creating democracy abroad? Indeed, the most glaring evidence of the Administration's nondemocratic instincts is the dependence of its foreign policy on high-tech weaponry and a volunteer army. Vietnam taught hawks of Rumsfeld and Cheney's generation that the US government cannot sustain a bloody confrontation with an "evil" enemy in the teeth of public opposition. But they also realized how to blunt public hostility to unexplained military adventures. This would be possible if precision weaponry could reduce casualties substantially and if the soldiers who were eventually killed or wounded were "volunteers" unable to find equivalent economic opportunities in the civilian economy and who were drawn disproportionately from minority groups with little political clout. To avoid the burden of explaining its irrationally targeted bellicosity, in other words, the Administration must assiduously avoid a draft, which could cause white middle-class America to start asking embarrassing questions. Its firm opposition to reinstating conscription, in other words, is rooted in a Vietnam-era aversion to democratic accountability. That men hostile to public oversight in their own country would go to war on the remote chance of bringing democratic accountability to Iraq defies belief. The only reasonable conclusion is that they continue to talk this talk because they can conjure up no better public justification for their irresponsible gamble, and they still hope to prevent a deniable fiasco from turning into an undeniable fiasco.

Mann seems to think that Cheney, Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz have introduced "broad, enduring changes in the underlying principles guiding American foreign policy." But the bulk of his book makes the opposite point, namely, that this Administration has managed foreign affairs so ineptly because it has been reflexively implementing out-of-date formulas in a

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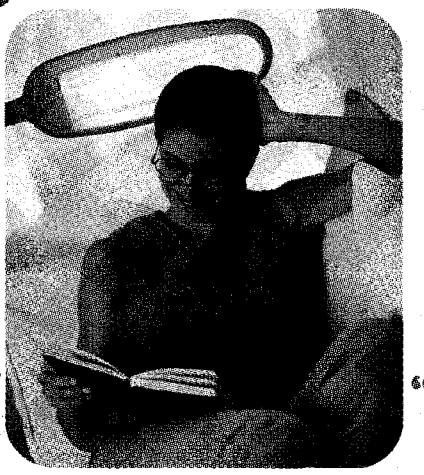

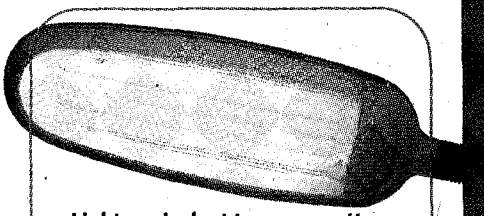

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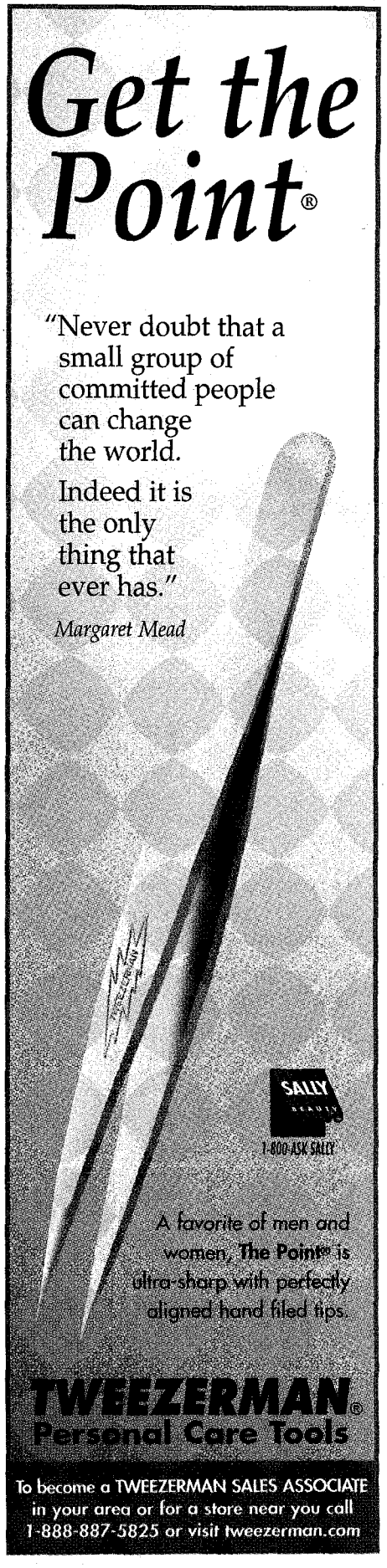
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changed security environment. During the cold war even the most extreme hawks were chastened in their aggressive impulses by fear of escalation into a full-blown conflict with the USSR. Once the Soviet Union collapsed, the fear and inhibitions mostly disappeared, but the psychological need to confront "evil" states remained. In the areas of the world today where the possibility of deadly escalation cannot be excluded, such as North Korea and the Taiwan Strait, the Administration still treads fairly cautiously. But in Iraq, alas, the lack of a major military rival excited some aging hard-liners into toppling a regime that they have no clue how to replace. They did so even though the invasion and occupation were bound to have exorbitant costs, diverting the country's scarce national security resources away from newer and graver threats. Unfortunately for us, we have only begun to witness the consequences of this ghastly misuse of unaccountable power. ■

Human, All Too Human

TERRY EAGLETON

HUMANISM AND DEMOCRATIC CRITICISM.
By Edward W. Said. Columbia. 154 pp. $19.95.

POWER, POLITICS, AND CULTURE: Interviews With Edward W. Said.
Edited and with an introduction by Gauri Viswanathan. Vintage. 485 pp. Paper $16.

Humanism, like democracy, is a word that labors under an excess of meaning. It can mean acknowledging the value of human beings, or denying the existence of God. In Ireland, "humanist" is still sometimes used as a euphemism for "atheist," in a hangover from the days when Irish atheists were as scandalous and exotic a species as Beverly Hills poststructuralists. Yet there are Christian humanists as well, for whom human beings are valuable precisely because they are an image of God. So not all humanism is secular.

Nor do all those who deny the existence of God install humanity in His place. Nietzsche thought this was just to replace one idol with another. For him, the death of God also spelled the death of Man. Hitler believed in neither God nor humanity, and the same was probably true of Frank Sinatra. Some humanists believe there is a yawning chasm between humanity and the rest of Nature, without necessarily claiming that humanity should reign sovereign over the world around it. Harder-nosed humanists, by contrast, believe that badgers and centipedes were provided for our use and enjoyment, rather like fluffy dressing gowns in posh hotels, and that the phrase "animal rights" is a logical absurdity. Humanism here means something like "human supremacism." But not all humanists are supremacists, just as not all animal lovers prefer animals to human beings, except for the English.

Humanism can mean a belief in an essential human nature, or the view that this nature is essentially positive. But you can sign on for the first without endorsing the second. Not all humanists are starry-eyed about humanity, as these essays by Edward Said make clear. For some, humanism means primarily a cultural movement associated with the European Renaissance, while for others it suggests a method of sociological analysis that allots priority to structures rather than individuals. Sociological antihumanists, however, are not always gratuitously nasty to defenseless little old men whom they chance upon in the street. Spinoza, who was renowned as a saint among philosophers for his gentleness and compassion, was also a full-blooded determinist for whom human beings were mere functions of natural laws. So he was an ethical humanist but a theoretical antihumanist. Some uses of "humanism" are too fuzzy, and some are too technical.

One should not look to Edward Said's posthumously collected lectures in *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* to sort out this semantic mess. As a card-carrying humanist, Said is remarkably casual in these pages about just what humanism amounts to. At one point he describes it as "the achievement of form by human will and agency," hardly the most lucid of definitions. What he is after in

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these illuminating lectures is what one might call a reconstructed or self-critical humanism—one that retains its belief in human value and in the great artistic works that embody it, but which has shed the elitism and exclusivism with which literary humanism is currently bound up. We would still read Dante and Proust, but we would also extend the very meaning of humanism in order to "excavate the silences, the world of memory, of itinerant, barely surviving groups, the places of exclusion and invisibility." In this way, Said the cultivated middle-class academic converges with Said the courageous champion of the oppressed.

It is, in fact, so sensible a suggestion that it is almost bound to fall on deaf ears. It would, for example, spell the end of the conflict within English departments between the wrinkled Old Fogeys who perversely insist on reaping quiet pleasure from Jane Austen, and the Bright Young Things down the corridor who write only on masturbation and body piercing. Since this would take the thrill out of literary studies, Said's even-handed proposal is bound to be ignored. It would also spell the end of a fair amount of English comic fiction, which thrives on American academic absurdity. Said mentions a new thought-crime known as "read-ism," which apparently means reading too closely. I myself have always regarded reading literary works as a positive obstacle to understanding them, and find I can produce my most convincing critical essays on books I have never even opened.

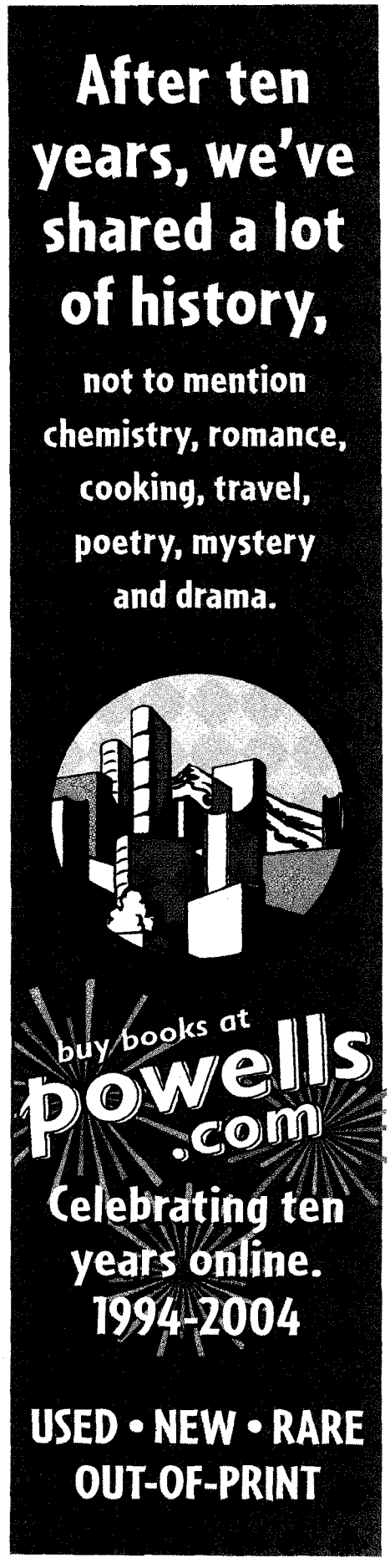
Extracting a "good" humanism from a "bad" one is not perhaps quite as simple an operation as Said makes it seem. George Steiner pointed long ago to the curious, rather chilling paradox by which, in the great humanist tradition, the most generous-spirited of values have been interwoven with the most haughtily authoritarian ones. (Some might see Steiner's own work as a case in point.) There is something about a heady affirmation of the human that tends to be blind to human frailty and ordinariness. In idealizing humanity, it can only rub its nose in how dismally far short of the ideal it falls. It can resonate with what Said aptly terms "a tone of mean-spirited rejection."

This book is not among the most eminent of Said's products. It is less intellectually high-powered than usual, no doubt in part because he was ill when he produced it. Yet it is also more typical of his extraordinary blend of radicalism and judiciousness than *Orientalism*, his most celebrated work. He detests Western imperialism but sees no need to apologize for teaching Conrad or Flaubert. He listens with vigilant attentiveness to emerging voices, yet rightly rejects the pious dogma that only members of a sidelined group can be permitted to speak on its behalf. He is a paid-up cosmopolitan but is irritated by "a lazy or laissez-faire feel-good multiculturalism." He reminds right-wing Eurocentric humanists in the mold of the late Allan Bloom that Italian Renaissance humanism had its roots in the Muslim colleges of the Mediterranean, while maintaining an unswerving commitment to what he calls a "collective human history."

It is perhaps a limitation of this little book that in comparison with, say, Said's writings on Palestine, there is not much in it with which good-hearted, middle-of-the-road liberals might disagree. This is always an error to be avoided as stringently as possible. If Said can sometimes sound like a liberal humanist, he can at times sound rather more discomfortingly like a radical humanist; but he never sounds much like a socialist humanist, in the style of Raymond Williams or E.P. Thompson. Like both these thinkers, however, he never really takes issue with the suspiciously sanguine aspects of humanism. Is there something in a generous faith in human capacities that is also callow and repressive? Does humanism thrive on a certain well-groomed blindness to our apparently inexhaustible ability to be morally obscene? Can any radicalism that has not gazed upon this dreadful Gorgon be anything other than skin-deep? These lectures do not hold the answer to such questions, but they are a poignant reminder that reasonableness and partisanship are not always the enemies that some leftists seem to think they are.

Whatever the occasional thinness of this book, there is no doubt that Said was an old-fashioned humanist in all the finest senses of the phrase. If he fought for the extension of the literary canon to groups and peoples it had shunned, it was not, in his view, a canon to be callowly derided. He did not see the need to choose between Jane Austen and Chinua Achebe. "I am not just interested in Palestinian themes in American literature," he remarks in a recent volume of interviews, *Power, Politics, and Culture*—something that set him apart from those Marxists who are interested only in novels about coal miners. He saw his own postcolonial inquiries as extending the work of great European humanists like Erich Auerbach, drawing upon their scrupulousness and erudition for new political ends. Nor did he accept the patronizing line that any novel produced in the postcolonial world is bound to be a masterpiece.

As *Power, Politics, and Culture* makes clear, Said's concern was justice, not identity. He was more interested in emancipating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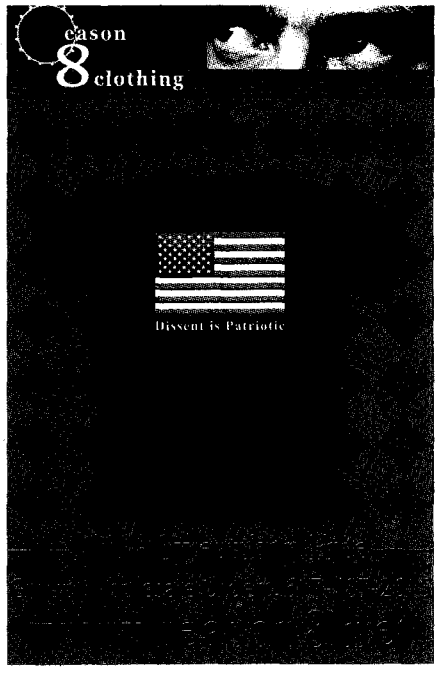

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the dispossessed than in celebrating the body or floating the signifier. As a major architect of modern cultural theory, he was profoundly out of sympathy with most of its cerebral convolutions, which he correctly saw as for the most part a symptom of political displacement and despair. He was distinctly nervous of orthodoxies and almost physically pained by rigid doctrinal systems. He was allergic to mealy-mouthed pieties of both right and left. The idea of obedience to a discipline struck him as mildly revolting. If he detested Zionism, he also called Saddam Hussein a pig, a fascist and a murderer. Now that American academia has become even more blandly emulsive and conflict-free in the self-censoring aftermath of 9/11, his admirable candor and abrasiveness are already beginning to sound like the remote echo of another world. ■

The Descent Into Barbarism

ABRAHAM BRUMBERG

THE COMING OF THE THIRD REICH: A History.
By Richard J. Evans. Penguin Press. 622 pp. $34.95.

Few of those who followed the David Irving libel trial held in London three years ago could avoid being struck by the calm but towering presence of the British historian Richard Evans. One of the chief witnesses for the defense, Evans succeeded, more than anyone else, in exposing David Irving as a foul, mendacious apologist for and admirer of Adolf Hitler. And a prolific one to boot. Over the course of several decades, Irving produced one volume of history after another, honing what Evans has called his "denier's credo"—that gas chambers either did not exist or were insignificant instruments in Hitler's policies; that the number of murdered Jews has been vastly exaggerated; and that in fact the Holocaust as such is nothing but a myth created by the wartime Allies and by "Jewish Zionists."

In preparing his testimony, Evans—no stranger to the literature on Nazi Germany—found to his astonishment that in the enormous bibliography on this subject (37,000 items by 2000, one scholar calculated) there are virtually no histories for the general audience, and that the few volumes that have succeeded, however impressively, in combining an academic with a popular approach suffer from one flaw or another. Thus Ian Kershaw's two-volume biography of Hitler focuses on those areas in which Hitler was personally involved, and rather neglects aspects with which Hitler was not directly concerned. Some excellent works are cast in an academic jargon that make them hard to digest for the more average reader, while others, Evans writes, "indulge in the luxury of moral judgment.... The story of how Germany, a stable and modern country, in less than a single lifetime led Europe into moral, physical and cultural ruin and despair is a story that has sobering lessons for us all; lessons, again, [which are] for the reader to take...not for the writer to give."

Both appalled and energized by this discovery, Evans embarked upon a work that would combine some of the best features of previous tomes (such as the emphasis on narrative in *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, by William Shirer), while identifying features distinctive in bringing about the emergence of Nazi Germany. It is remarkable that after years of assiduous research, despite the appearance of thousands of scholarly works, after all the multitude of memoirs and diaries, we are still haunted by the same questions: How could Germany, of all countries, so civilized, so rich in intellectual, scientific and artistic achievement, Goethe's fabled country of *Dichter und Denker* (poets and thinkers), produce, "in less than a single lifetime," as Evans notes, such an unspeakably monstrous system as Nazism? How did it happen that a country where Jews constituted around 1 percent of the total population could seek their complete extermination? How could a leader of a powerful state, who enjoyed the docile support of the vast majority of his subjects, become so relentlessly bent on self-destruction? Can the lessons of previous generations be unalterably lost upon their successors?

These are some of the enduring questions that Evans set himself to explore. The present volume, which covers the period up to Hitler's consolidation of power in 1933,

Abraham Brumberg has written extensively on Eastern European and Jewish affairs. He is now completing his autobiography, to be called Journeys Through Vanishing Worlds.

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will be followed by two more, the third ending with the demise of Nazi Germany in 1945. Not surprisingly, Evans brings to his task the same qualifications that made him such an outstanding witness in the Irving trial—a solid mastery of facts, both large and minute, a gift for distinguishing between similar and misleadingly similar phenomena and a straightforward, lucid style.

In the first part of his book, Evans discusses the ideology of German expansionism developed by groups like the Pan-German League in the late nineteenth century, and the lacerating impact of World War I and the Versailles Treaty, and asks whether these ideas and events can be regarded as direct roots of Nazism. His view is that, however appalling, and however strikingly evocative of Nazism, the emergence of an antiliberal, militaristic and Jew-hating German right in the late nineteenth century does not suffice to explain its provenance. Although "most of the elements that went into its eclectic ideology were already current in Germany before 1914," these ideas could acquire mass appeal only after World War I. Nazism was born in the "atmosphere of national trauma, political extremism, violent conflict and revolutionary upheaval" that characterized Germany in the 1920s, when the country was on the brink of disaster. "The dramatic collapse of Germany into political chaos," writes Evans, "provided the spur to translate extreme ideas into violent action. The heady mixture of hatred, fear and ambition...suddenly gained a crucial extra element: the willingness, determination even, to use physical force."

Nevertheless, "such ideas still remained those of a minority even after 1918, and the use of physical force to put them into effect was still confined to a tiny, extremist fringe. German society and politics were polarized into extremes by the collapse of 1918–19, not converted to a general enthusiasm for extreme nationalism. And, crucially, the centre ground of politics was still occupied by people and parties committed to the creation of a stable, functioning parliamentary democracy, to social reform, to cultural freedom and to economic opportunity for all."

Not, alas, for long. The center would not hold. Gradually, antidemocratic, xenophobic and cataclysmic notions, once championed by extremist groups, were taken over by mass political movements. In a country obsessed with discipline and order, the *Füehrerprinzip*—the belief in a single, powerful leader—was at first adopted by small sects, then by more established political parties and eventually (with the help

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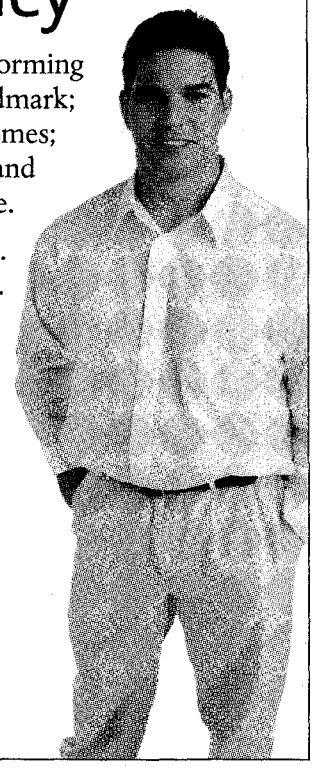

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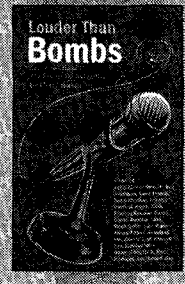

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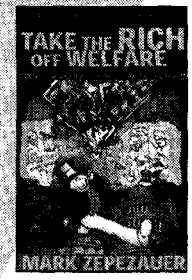

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of the Italian Fascists, whose Duce principle Hitler admired) became enshrined by the Nazis in the person of Adolf Hitler. The German Social Democrats, the one party committed to the defense of the Weimar Republic, had themselves split between those who supported World War I and those who opposed it, finally resulting in the emergence of two competing social democratic parties, the more radical of the two drawing closer to and finally merging with the Communists, bitter foes of the parliamentary system and of the republic.

The Social Democrats (SPD), furthermore, gave the country its first democratically elected president, Friedrich Ebert (1919–25), but endowed him with vast personal power he could and did use against any real or perceived threats to the republic. In fact, Ebert employed this power on no fewer than 136 separate occasions, dislodged legitimately elected governments, introduced censorship and, most appalling of all, made use of the Free Corps, the semi-fascist authoritarian paramilitary group, to murder Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, two highly popular revolutionary leaders who in 1919 tried to organize a left-wing putsch in Berlin. Following their assassination, over a thousand of their followers were butchered on the streets of Berlin.

I have often wondered why the postwar SPD named its major foundation after the pathetic figure of Ebert. He was indeed for many years the leader of the party. He was not a right-winger and not a fascist. And the attempted putsch by Liebknecht and Luxemburg was an act of suicidal recklessness, threatening the fledgling democracy of the German republic. Yet to employ the Free Corps was rather like using gas to douse a fire. And it played straight into the hands of demagogues, above all Hitler and his followers.

With the same attention to detail and rigorous logic that Evans employed to demonstrate the malleability of those forces that, all similarities with the Nazi movement notwithstanding, did not determine its growth, he now explains the intransigence of the right-wing forces and their ideologies, and the political, moral and economic climate in postwar Germany that facilitated their eventual triumph.

The punishing terms imposed by the Versailles Treaty on a prostrate Germany, the awesome reparations it was forced to pay, the gradual destruction of the country's industry and the mammoth inflation—in the 1920s prices reached a billion times their prewar level, incomparably higher than in any other European country—followed by the financial crash of the late 1920s and even worse impoverishment, profoundly alienated Germany's working and middle classes. In addition, these developments intensified the authoritarian tendencies within the Catholic Church and its anti-Semitic obsessions, never far below the surface.

Anti-French feelings, also never far below the surface, grew as Germans became convinced that their traditional foe was pursuing policies designed to eviscerate the German nation. (Evans cites an entry in *I Will Bear Witness*, the diaries of Victor Klemperer, a moderately conservative Jewish scholar, who despised and feared Nazism and anti-Semitism but also detested the French; for wasn't it the French who occupied the Saar and Ruhr valleys?) Vengeful nationalism espoused by the Nazis, with their demonic mass rallies, untrammeled demagogy and poisonous Jew-hatred led to violent brawls and military clashes.

In a fascinating chapter on the explosion of the arts—literature, theater, cinematography, painting, music—Evans shows how the corrosive cynicism, scorn for "bourgeois" values, penchant for mysticism and sexual license (think of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* and the *Threepenny Opera*) were all in fact a reflection of the disillusionment that swept the country in the 1920s. The disproportionate presence of Jews in the arts—as in other areas of public life—further inflamed passions against the enemies and traducers of "ancient German values."

I have focused on the first two-thirds of the book not because the rest of it, which brings the story up to the creation of the Nazi state in 1933, is any less significant, penetrating or absorbing. Evans's painstaking discussion of the rise of the Nazi party, its internal schisms, the role of the military, the impact of the struggle between the Communists and Socialists on the growth of Nazism and the vignettes of various political leaders is mesmerizing. If I concentrate on the processes that led to the victory of Hitler and his allies, it is because it is there that we find the fundamental problems raised by the book—the whys and wherefores of Nazism—most compellingly spelled out. One finally puts down this magnificent volume thirsty, on the one hand, for the next installment in the Nazi saga yet still haunted by the questions Evans poses and so masterly grapples with. When all is said and done, was Nazism, then, inevitable—more than likely—or, despite everything, not? *The Coming of the Third Reich* is an overwhelming book. But having read and admired it, I remain unsure about the answers to these questions. ■

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FILMS

Love and Theft

STUART KLAWANS

KILL BILL VOL. 2 • THE SADDEST MUSIC IN THE WORLD
THE TWILIGHT SAMURAI • THE CLAY BIRD

Antiquarian mishmash lathers the April screen. In *Kill Bill Vol. 2*, scenes recollected from thirty-year-old kung fu epics splash across images from spaghetti westerns and two-lane-blacktop shockers, as if projected one on top of the other in the haunted grind house of Quentin Tarantino's skull. Meanwhile, *The Saddest Music in the World* offers an unstable and tantalizing approximation of an older and more arty cinema: a moment that might almost be from *Metropolis*, which dissolves into something rather like *L'Inhumaine*, which melts into a passing semblance of *Love Me Tonight*, all of them realized in the cheap, foggy and fleeting style that makes Guy Maddin's mind resemble the Museum of Dry Ice.

How little it tells us, to say these films are composed of fragments of bygone pictures! How glad I am that the world has finally gotten beyond postmodernism, whose wearisome explainers used to claim such recyclings for their own! (As if Proust hadn't written his *Pastiches et mélanges*; as if there were no "Oxen of the Sun" chapter in *Ulysses*.) If we were to think about the contrast in spirit between Tarantino and Maddin, rather than the blunt fact of their both being hommagenizers, we might notice that the first wants to replicate the films and television shows of his youth, while the second moons over movies his parents might have watched when young. Tarantino glories aggressively in himself; since he's all right, then so are the pulp fictions that formed him. Maddin wonders uneasily at how he came to be; his heart being troubled, he seeks the trouble that must reside in those enigmatically beautiful old pictures. As these directors' starting points differ, so do their rhythms. Think of how Tarantino saunters through a movie with a hipster's gait, now and then telling you how long you'll wait until the next big event. (Will two minutes pass before a drug takes effect? Then a character has two minutes of screen time to spin out a tale.) Maddin impatiently skitters from shot to shot, which he records with as many as eight cameras at once; he never has enough time to catch up with the past. Or consider the implications of the directors' manner of dress. Tarantino sometimes sports a Kangol cap. Maddin has been known to affect spats.

The contrast holds even on levels far more superficial than costume—plot, for example—although here description falters, there being far too much incident to summarize in *The Saddest Music in the World* and far too little in *Kill Bill Vol. 2*. Of the latter, I need say only that the Bride (Uma Thurman) has three former partners left to murder, having previously dispatched two (plus a private army) in *Vol. 1*. This time she must exact revenge against trailer-dwelling cowboy Budd (Michael Madsen), one-eyed underhanded Elle (Daryl Hannah) and ultimately Bill himself—her lover, her boss, the father of her child (David Carradine, playing a noir version of his role on television's *Kung Fu*). Arithmetic would suggest a rate of 1.5 violent deaths per hour—a pace that Tarantino varies in an interesting way, to give himself leisure for extended sequences such as the Bride's return from the dead (for the second time in the picture) and her apprenticeship to the evil kung fu master Pai Mei (Gordon Liu).

What's the point of it all? Let me delay the answer long enough to note that *The Saddest Music in the World* has its own quota of violent deaths. Set on a snowy, nocturnal soundstage that represents 1933 Winnipeg, the world capital of sadness, Maddin's film concerns a radio contest sponsored by beer baroness Lady Port-Huntly (Isabella Rossellini), who means to capture the US market as soon as Prohibition is repealed. To promote her solace-giving brew, she offers a prize of $25,000 to the nation that boasts the saddest music. Teams race to Winnipeg to compete before an audience of suds-swilling, earflapped locals, with Siam pitted against Mexico in the first round, Canada against Cameroons. (The musicians play simultaneously, advancing menacingly on one another as a play-by-play team comments over loudspeakers.) Although the radio listeners understand these duels to be global in scope, they have a personal meaning for Lady Port-Huntly, since the Canadian representative, Fyodor (David Fox), is the retired physician and former suitor who drunkenly amputated her legs. The US contestant, a crypto-Canadian, is Fyodor's son, Chester Kent (Mark McKinney, who behaves like Gable in *It Happened One Night* and looks like Tom Hanks crossed with a porcini mushroom). A penniless Broadway producer, and the man Lady Port-Huntly really loved, Chester has an American's imperviousness to sadness, which he thinks is no more than a showbiz put-on, and which he therefore can deliver with more sass and pizazz than the other competitors combined. In this attitude, he is diametrically opposed by the Serbian representative, the veiled cellist Gavrilo, whose unbearably mournful performances are atonements for the deaths of 9 million people in the Great War. Nevertheless, Gavrilo is actually another crypto-Canadian: Chester's hypersensitive brother Roderick.

I could go on. (Maddin does, abetted by co-screenwriter George Toles, production designer Matthew Davies and especially composer Christopher Dedrick, whose score consists mostly of variations, demented and brilliant, on Jerome Kern's "The Song Is You.") The point is that *The Saddest Music in the World* is not only jammed with more shots, styles, musical excerpts and astonishing actions than *Kill Bill Vol. 2* but is more richly suggestive, too.

When *Vol. 1* came out last year, I remarked, tentatively, that Tarantino had introduced a theme that ought to be taken seriously: a woman's conflicting desire to wreak vengeance and save a child from violence. Whether this theme would play out seriously remained to be seen. Now that we have the second half of the picture, I'd say the answer is, "Not quite." To Tarantino's credit, he complicates the setup in a way that's just and moving. (It seems the most important child was corrupted before the Bride could rescue her. And who knows? Once the Bride is on the scene, maybe she'll do damage of her own.) In handling this idea, though, Tarantino is a forgetful screenwriter. He gets so caught up in his mazelike digressions that he's as surprised as you to turn a corner and find the film's emotional core standing there. What's he supposed to do with the main subject, now that it's on screen? He's not sure. He cracks a few jokes; he wraps up the plot.

So he leaves you this time with little more than momentary pleasures: locations in China and the California desert, Uma Thurman's miraculously versatile performance, some nifty tricks of framing.

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Not bad—but not equal to the best excesses of *Vol. 1*, which seem to have consumed most of Tarantino's inventive energy.

Guy Maddin's inventiveness does not flag. Whether he's fetishizing Isabella Rossellini's mouth, staging a funeral on ice skates, sliding a troupe of African drummers into a vat of beer or calling up the ghost of a dead child, he's unfailingly outlandish, hilarious, odd, wistful and genuinely, unappeasably disturbed. Maddin looks at a family musicale and envisions scenes of grotesque loss. He looks at national stereotypes and sees a broken family. And when he looks at old movies, he sees today's world, which is (you'll forgive the plot giveaway) set on fire at the end by an optimistic, can-do Yank.

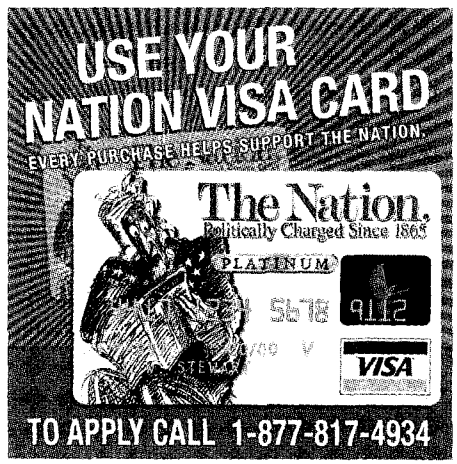
Kazuo Ishiguro wrote the screenplay from which all this evolved. I'll bet he's as astonished as anyone.

Short Takes: Since *Vol. 2* is the Chinese half of *Kill Bill*, which may leave you longing for the Japanese action of *Vol. 1*, I draw your attention to *The Twilight Samurai*, which is now being released in the United States after winning a dozen Japanese Academy Awards. Set toward the end of the shogun era (that is, just before *The Last Samurai* takes place), *The Twilight Samurai* is the tale of a meek and impoverished provincial clerk—unmanfully devoted to his young daughters, hopelessly in love with a well-born divorcée—who just happens to be an expert swordsman. Hiroyuki Sanada is both credible and lovable in the title role, which is quite a feat; the wildly popular Rie Miyazawa plays the love interest. Yoji Yamada, who was responsible for forty-eight *Tora-San* films, provided the smoothly professional direction.

Also opening theatrically on April 30 in New York, San Francisco and San Rafael, California, is the exceptionally beautiful Bangladeshi feature *The Clay Bird*. Directed by Tareque Masud from a script he wrote with producer Catherine Masud, it's a wonderful example of fluvial cinema, with the point-of-view character Anu (young Nurul Islam Bablu) dividing his time between a riverfront Islamic school in town and a riverfront home back in the country. The period is the late 1960s, just before the violent break between Bangladesh and Pakistan, and political arguments are swirling around Anu, with his father (the village's dour homeopath) and the school principal both arguing for Pakistan as the bastion of Islam, which must remain strict, militant and united. Anu isn't so sure. He's more concerned with the well-being of his schoolmate Rokon (an outcast among outcasts) and his little sister Asma (who needs medical care but gets only her father's powders). Strongly reminiscent of the films of Satyajit Ray—what higher praise can I offer?—*The Clay Bird* sometimes falters a bit in its delineation of character but flows magnificently whenever it observes the landscape, the architecture or a magical series of musical performances. Highly recommended.

Screening Schedule: April 27 marks both South African Freedom Day and the public opening of an ambitious anniversary festival. "Ten Years of Freedom: Films From the New South Africa" is being presented in New York City by The Documentary Campaign, with the support of Archbishop Desmond Tutu. On the bill are nineteen features and documentaries, fourteen shorts, three works commissioned for the television program *Project 10: Real Stories From a Free South Africa* and selections from five other outstanding television series. Among the special guests participating at screenings is Pete Seeger, who is scheduled to appear at the opening-night presentation of *A Lion's Tail* (directed by François Verster), the true story of how the song "Mbube," by the Zulu shepherd Solomon Linda, turned into the American pop hit "The Lion Sleeps Tonight" with no benefit to the original composer.

Other notable festival events include a special screening at 6 PM, April 29, titled *Ten Years of Freedom in Solidarity Against HIV/AIDS*, organized as a benefit for the Treatment Action Campaign; and a free, daylong symposium on April 30 at New York University's International Center for Advanced Studies (53 Washington Square South, 10 AM–5 PM). "Ten Years of Freedom: Films From the New South Africa" runs through May 2, with most screenings taking place at the Clearview Cinema, Broadway at 62nd Street. Full information is available at www.tenyearsoffreedom.org. Tickets are available from the Clearview Cinema box office, www.moviefone.com and (212) 777-FILM. ■



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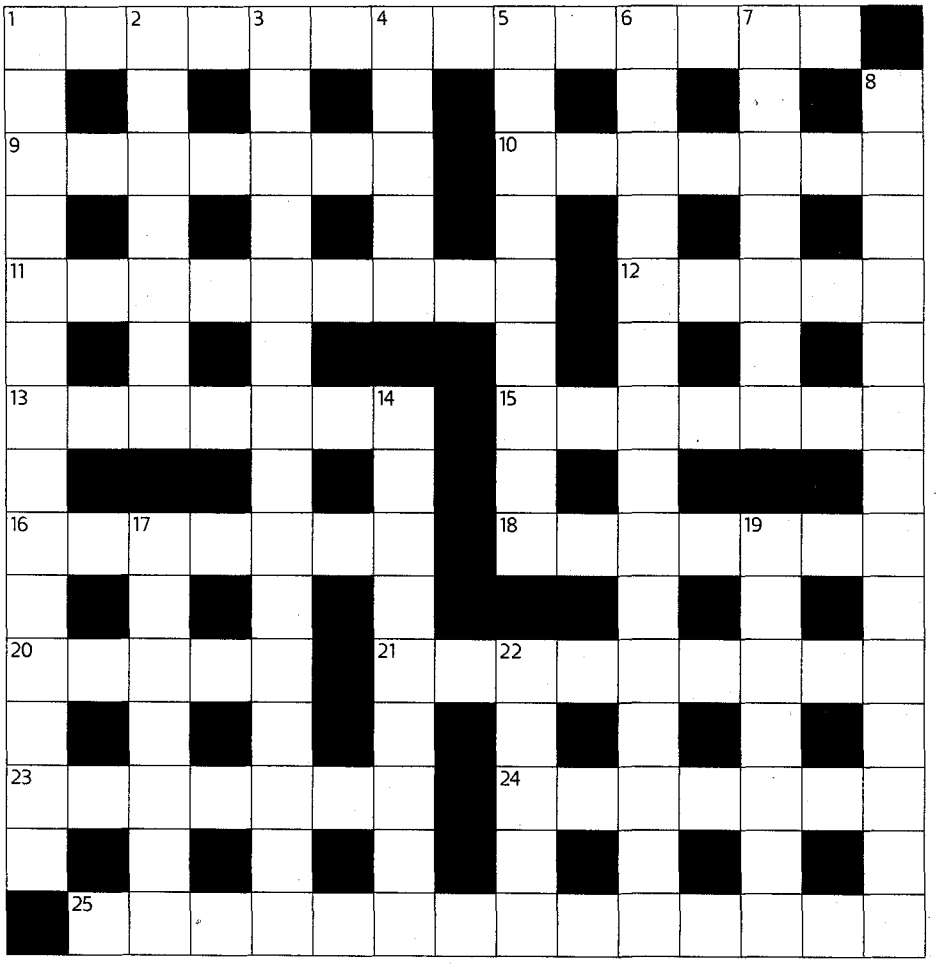

ACROSS

1 What keeps some people warm in winter, having liver trouble, hoping to be a version of Captain Cook. (4,4,6)

9 Have your picture taken, or be vaccinated, when it becomes warm. (4,3)

10 French wine turns acid around it—responsible for a pretty picture! (2,5)

11 Wheel the wrong way, if you do, returning to plead corruption. (9)

12 A climbing vine, with a nail that needs straightening out. (5)

13 Is in the process of litigation, producing such things as *The Nation*. (7)

15 One might for a fancy ball, but if it went the other way you'd have to bawl someone out. (5,2)

16 Fie! Ruin—ruin! Bush claims to be like this. (7)

18 Quiet notice to the Gipper is not pointless—he's the boss! (7)

20 Proving certain animals need direction first, so this is where you grab 'em by the neck! (5)

21 Perhaps mull too deeply on the sea, classically—but if you hold such stock you can have more of the same. (5,4)

23 The sun is hidden when a barker comes around it—being very related to your feelings. (7)

24 Took place in the evening, and gave Ned some trouble. (7)

25 Land on water? Just dessert, if you get it! (8,6)

DOWN

1 Is one exaggeratedly gloomy with it? (14)

2 Becomes aware of the fact that one's upset, having an internal muscular contraction. (7)

3 He led a band all across the country. (March will always be associated with him.) (4,6,5)

4 An unfortunate death caused by what the lazy man did to work. (5)

5 Got ready to ride, being unhappy with a number escorted skyward. (7,2)

6 What a flat-top might accomplish is a quality not easily shaken. (15)

7 Being possibly dense, an accumulation of 9 could make one of these. (7)

8 Captured by mistake, it obviously is not understood. (14)

14 A piece of cloth lifts over one with no hair—one! (March has association with the Eternal City and him.) (9)

17 Select those who must try to find the little devil on a crooked lane. (7)

19 A lot has to get sorted out with a soldier having a bit of trouble with the listening equipment. (7)

22 Nothing gets called up like an anthropoid type—not quite a fiery color! (5)

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B	R	I	D	G	E	W	O	R	K	■	S	T	E	W
A	■	N	■	A	■	A	■	H	■	C	■	S	■	I
C	I	T	A	D	E	L	■	O	D	O	R	A	N	T
H	■	E	■	S	■	L	■	M	■	N	■	R	■	H
E	D	A	M	■	B	A	R	B	E	D	W	I	R	E
L	■	R	■	F	■	C	■	U	■	O	■	N	■	R
O	N	S	T	A	G	E	■	S	Y	L	L	A	B	I
R	■	■	■	S	■	■	■	■	■	I	■	■	■	N
O	B	L	A	T	E	S	■	L	O	N	G	P	I	G
F	■	E	■	E	■	K	■	E	■	G	■	A	■	G
M	E	N	I	N	G	I	T	I	S	■	O	R	A	L
U	■	I	■	E	■	D	■	S	■	P	■	V	■	A
S	P	E	A	R	E	D	■	T	H	E	R	E	I	N
I	■	N	■	S	■	O	■	E	■	R	■	N	■	C
C	U	T	A	■	P	O	O	R	F	I	G	U	R	E

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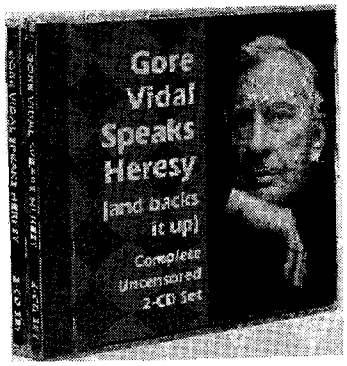

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